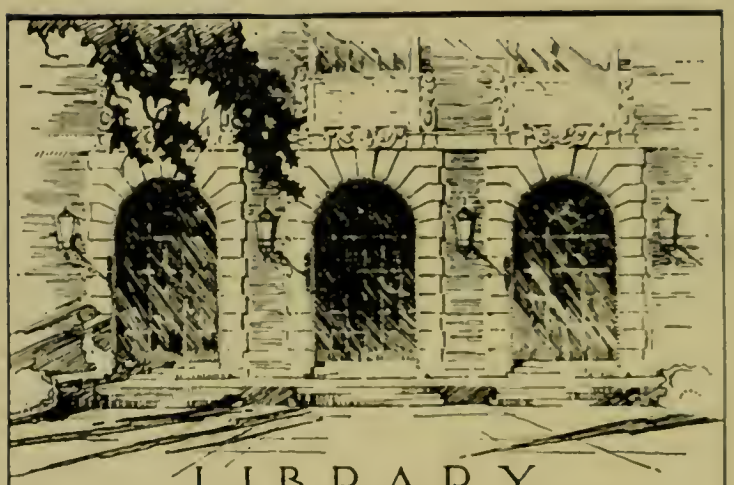

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THE

WOLFE OF BADENOCH.

EDINBURGH:

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[Lauder, Sir Thomas Dick]

THE

WOLFE OF BADENOCH:

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOCHANDHU."

De cornada de ansaron
Guarde Dios mi corazon.
Spanish Proverb.

VOL. III.

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ERRATA ET CORRIGENDA.

Page 1, line 3 from the bottom, *after* police of *insert* the.
—— 33, line 15, *for* revived, *read* rejoiced.
—— 95, line 11, *for* ho, *read* hot.
—— 136, line 11 from the bottom, *after* faces *insert* not.
—— 142, line 8, *for* roquet, *read* raquet.
—— 176, line 1, *for* then, *read* thin.
—— 181, line 2 from the bottom, *for* coarse, *read* loose.
—— 289, line 17, *for* use, *read* employment.
—— 298, line 4, *strike out* day.
—— 306, line 3 from the bottom, *for* so, *read* do.
—— 317, line 10, *for* none, *read* no one.
—— 349, line 11, *for* continue, *read* consume.
—— 364, line 13, *for* Euphane, *read* Euphame.
—— 389, line 9 from the bottom, *for* a, *read* an.
—— 423, line 13, *instead of* for, *read* fan.
—— 425, line 10, *before* hands, *insert* her—line 9 from bottom, *for* sprung, *read* sprang.
—— 464, line 2 from bottom, *for* inserviceable, *read* unserviceable.

THE

WOLFE OF BADENOCH.

CHAPTER I.

It was some days after the lady's arrival that five horsemen knocked at the gate of the hostel of the Norham Tower. They were clad rather as pilgrims than as warriors, and, arriving by the English side of the river, were judged to have come from the south. Matters had undergone a change since we had last occasion to notice the hall of Norham. Old Kyle had been gathered to his fathers, his buxom wife had wept her fair number of days, and beginning to recover her spirits by the reflection that she was a well-looking and wealthy widow, her heart was already besieged by numerous lovers. Though under a woman's government, the police of Norham Tower was at this moment more strict than usual. The war had made its mistress careful

to rid it, at an early hour every night, of all straggling topers. There were certain privileged customers, indeed, to whom a more liberal license was granted, and of this number was Mr Thomas Turnberry, the squire equerry.

As two of the strangers, of nobler mien than the rest, entered the common room, they found the esquire in the act of rising from table, with another man in whose company he had been drinking.

"Awell," said the latter; "I bid thee good e'en, Sir Squire. I'll warrant, thou shalt not find better steeds between Tweed and Tyne, than the two I have sold thee."

"Ay, ay, Master Truckthwaite," replied Turnberry with a sarcastic smile, "thy word is all well; yet would I rather trust the half of my own eye than the whole of thy tongue in such matters. Good e'en, good e'en. A precious knave, I wot," added he, after the man was gone.

"Doth that varlet sell thee good cattle, Sir Squire?" said one of the strangers who had entered.

"Nay, in truth, he is a proper cheat," replied Turnberry. "But the villain had to do with a man who hath lived all his life in a stable, and one, moreover, who hath sober steady habits.

Your drunkard hath ever but poor chance in a bargain with your sober man."

"Most true," replied the stranger. "Here, tapster; a flagon of Rhynwyn. Wilt thou stay, Sir Squire, and help us to drain it?"

"Rhynwyn!" exclaimed Turnberry; "by St Cuthbert, but there is music in the very clink of the word. Nay, Sir Pilgrim, I care not an I taste with thee ere I go; I am but a poor drinker, yet hath honest Rhynwyn its charms."

"Ha," said Tom, after deeply returning the stranger's pledge, "this is right wholesome stuff, I promise ye, my masters. 'Tis another guess-liquor than old Mother Rowlandson's i' the Castle."

"Thou art of the Castle, then?" said he who had always spoken. "I drink to the health of thy gallant old captain, Sir Walter de Selby."

"Thank ye, thank ye," replied Tom, taking the flagon. "Well, here's to old Wat. Many is the ride we have had over the Border together; and many is the hard knock we have both tane and given, side by side. Trust me, there breathes not a better man. His health, God wot, hath been none of the best of late; so, with thy good leave, Sir Pilgrim, I'll drink to it again."

"Hath he not a daughter?" demanded the pilgrim.

"Yea, that he hath," replied Tom—"an only daughter, whose beauty hath been the talk of all Northumberland."

"Let us drink to her health, then," said the pilgrim.

"Here's to the Lady de Vere, then," said Turnberry, lifting the flagon to his head to do justice to the health.

"The Lady de Vere!" said the pilgrim who had not yet spoken, betraying an emotion that escaped Tom Turnberry, in the long draught he was taking.

"Ay, the Lady de Vere," said Tom, taking the flagon from his head. "The Lady Eleanore de Selby is now the Lady de Vere, as we have all heard at the Castle since two or three days have gone by. Sir Walter would have fain had her marry Sir Rafe Piersie, who courted her, but his haughtiness sorted ill with her high and untameable spirit; so she was contrarisome, and ran away with a love of her own choosing, some time ago."

"And who might the lover be who bore away so rich a prize?" demanded the pilgrim.

"Why, one of the court lordlings, as we now learn, a Sir something de Vere, a kinsman to the King's favourite, the banished Duke of Ireland. He is but lately come from abroad, it

seems, for he is a foreign knight born, and being suspected as coming on some secret mission to the King, it is thought that he will rise high in his good graces. The poor ould soul Sir Walter did live in grievous case until these few days bygone, for he knew not until then what had befallen his daughter. But now that he hath learned who his son-in-law is, he hath somewhat raised his head. But fye on me," added the squire, after a long draught, that enabled him to see the bottom of the flagon, "I must hie me to the Castle; and so good night, and many thanks, my civil masters. Trust me, I shall right willingly bestow a can upon you when ye do come this way again, if ye will but ask for old Thomas Turnberry, the esquire equerry."

The dialogue between Tom Turnberry and the two strangers had been over for a good hour, when another conversation took place, a few steps from the gate of the inn, between Mrs Kyle and one who considered himself a favoured lover.

"These be plaguy cunning knaves," said Mrs Kyle; "they thinks, Ise warrant me, that no one doth know 'em; yet—but I shall say nothing, not I."

"I dare swear a man would need to be no fool who should strive to deceive thee, Mrs

Kyle," replied her companion, willing to draw her on a little.

"Me!" replied she; "trust me, the Old Fiend himself would not cheat me; for instance, now, that saucy Sang there did no sooner show his face within the four walls o' the Norham Tower, than I did straightway know him through all his disguises; and so having once nosed him, I did quickly smell out his fellow-esquire, and the two knights their masters."

"That was clever in thee, i' faith, Mrs Kyle," replied her companion.

"Yea, but my name be not Margaret Kyle an I make not more out by my cleverness," said the dame. "But, mum for that."

"Nay, thou knowest thou canst not be Margaret Kyle long, my bonny dame," replied the man.

"Fye thee now," replied she, "sure it will be long ere I do trust me to men again, after honest Sylvester, my poor dear husband that was."

"And what didst thou say they were here for?" demanded her companion.

"Ye may trow they are here for no good," replied the dame: "I'll warrant me the seizing o' them will be a right brave turn; but, mum again, for he who is to take them this night, did

say as how none should ken nothing on't till the stroke should be strucken; yea, and by the same token, he did gie me kisses enow to seal up my mouth."

"And when did Sir Miers tell thee this?" demanded the man.

"Sir Miers!" replied Mrs Kyle; "laucker-daisey, did I tell thee that it was Sir Miers? St Mary, I had nae will to hae done that. Hoot toot, my lips hae not been half glued."

"And so thou dost say that Sir Miers is to surround the house to-night, and to take these same strangers?" observed the man.

"Yea, but of a truth I should na hae tell'd thee a' that; may my tongue be blistered for't," replied Mrs Kyle; "for he bid me take especial care, aboon a' things, to let thee know nought on't."

"Nay, Mrs Kyle," said the man, "but thou knowest thou dost love me over much to hide anything from me."

"Oh ay, for a matter o' that, I do love thee well enow," replied Mrs Kyle; "but Sir Miers hath such pleasant ways with him."

"Hath he?" replied the man carelessly. "Thou didst say, I think, that the attempt is to be made at midnight, and that thou art to be on the watch to let them in?"

"Nay, then," said Mrs Kyle, "I did verily say no sike thing, I wot. What I did say was this, that Sir Miers is to be here an hour after midnight, and that John Hosteler is to let them in."

"Ay, ay, I see I did mistake thy words," replied the man. "Why, holy St Cuthbert, thou wilt get a power of money for thine information."

"So Sir Miers hath promised me," replied Mrs Kyle; "but what doth chiefly season the matter to my stomach, is the spicy revenge I shall hae against that flouting knave Sang, and the very thought o' this doth keenly edge me to aid the gallant Sir Miers in his enterprise; yet, to tell thee the truth, the handsome knight might raukon on as much service at my hands, yea or more, when it mote please him bid me."

"So," replied her companion; "but come, I will see thee into the house, drink one cup of thine ale with thee, and so speed me to the other end of the village to Sir Miers. Who knows but I may be wanted, after all, to bear the brunt of this business."

By this time the two knights and their three attendants were the sole tenants of the common room, and this circumstance, coupled with the disguises they wore, led them to imagine that they ran no risk of discovery.

Robert Lindsay, who was the fifth man, took up a lamp, and sallied forth to look at the horses ere he should seek repose. All was quiet in the court-yard, as well as in the various buildings surrounding it. He entered the stable, but though there were wain horses enow there belonging to the hostel, he saw, with utter dismay, that the five steeds belonging to his party were gone. He turned to rush out of the stable, to tell the knights of this treacherous robbery, when the light of the lamp in his hand flashed on the figure of a man, who was determinedly posted in the doorway, as if resolved to oppose his passage.

"Ralpho Proudfoot!" exclaimed Lindsay in astonishment; and then observing that he was fully armed, and that he carried a lance in his hand, whilst he himself had not even his sword, he gave himself up for lost; but resolving to sell his life as dearly as possible, he wrenched a rung from one of the stalls, and planted himself in a posture of defence.

"Nay, thou needest look for no injury at my hands," said Proudfoot; "this haughty spirit of mine, the which did once make me thy determined foe, because thou wert promoted above me, doth now prompt me not to be outdone by thee in a generous deed. I come to warn thee,

that an attempt on the liberty, if not on the lives, of thee, and those that be with thee, is to be made, within less than an hour hence, by Sir Miers de Willoughby and a strong force. The reward for taking prisoners of sike note, together with the gold to be gotten for their ransom, is the temptation to this enterprise. Lose not a moment, then, in rousing the knights, and warning them of their danger."

"But what hath become of our horses?" demanded Lindsay, not yet recovered from his surprise.

"It was I who removed them," replied Proudfoot. "I took them from the stable, after leaving the hosteller to sleep off the heavy draughts of ale I made him swallow; they stand ready caparisoned under the trees a few yards behind the inn. Quick, bring me to the knights, that I may show them their danger, and teach them how to avoid it; not a moment is to be lost."

Without farther question Lindsay led the way to the common room where the knights were lying. They were soon roused, and listened to Proudfoot's account of the plot against them with considerable surprise; but they hesitated to believe him, and were in doubt what to do.

"Nay, then, Sirs Knights," said Proudfoot, "an ye will hesitate, certain captivity must be-

fall ye. Captivity, did I say? yea, something worse; a base and black thirst of vengeance doth move this treacherous knight against thee, Sir John Assueton. I have reason to know that he hath ever cherished it sith thy last encounter."

"'Twere better to plant ourselves here, and fight to the death with what weapons we may have about us," said Sir Patrick Hepborne.

"Right, my friend," said Sir John Assueton, "we at least know and can be true to one another, and that of itself will give us victory."

"We shall be prepared for them," said Mortimer Sang, "and we shall make them fly before us by the very suddenness of our assault."

"How many De Willoughby spears are of them?" demanded the taciturn Roger Riddel, with extreme composure.

"Some two dozen at the least, I warrant me," replied Proudfoot, "and all fully appointed."

"Bring they Norham Castle on their backs?" demanded Riddel again.

"Nay," replied Proudfoot, "their leader hath kept his scheme to himself, that he may have the greater share of booty and ransom money."

"But Norham Castle hath ears," said Riddel again.

"Thou sayest true, friend," replied Proud-

foot. "Were resistance to be made, the din of arms and the noise of the assault would soon bring out the garrison upon ye. Quickly resolve, Sirs Knights, for the hour wanes, and they will be here anon. What can ye fear of traiterie from me? Could I not have left ye to fall easy victims to Sir Miers de Willoughby's snare?"

"So please ye, gallant knights, I will answer with my life for the truth of Ralpho Proudfoot in this matter," said Lindsay confidently.

"Nay, an ye fear me, ye shall all stand about me," said Proudfoot; "and if ye do find me a traitor, your five daggers may drink my blood at once."

The minds of the two knights were at last made up, and they resolved to trust themselves to the guidance of Ralpho Proudfoot. Armed with their daggers alone, they stole silently out in the dark, and were so planted by him behind the gate, as to be prepared to rush out when the time for doing so should come. Ralpho Proudfoot cautioned them to keep perfectly quiet. To attempt to escape along the street of the village at that moment, would have subjected them to certain observation; they were therefore to wait his signal, and to follow him. He placed himself, as he had said, in the midst of

them, and set himself to listen for a sound from the outside.

They had not been long posted, when footsteps were heard approaching very gently. There was then some whispering, and a slight cough. Proudfoot immediately answered it.

"Art there, John?" said a voice in an under tone.

"Yea," replied Proudfoot, imitating the language of the hosteller, "but they be's still astir; so when the yate be opened, ye maun rush in like fiends on them, for the hinge do creak, and they will start to their arms wi' the noise. Are ye a' ready?"

"We are," replied the voice without.

"Noo, then, in on them and at them," cried Proudfoot, throwing the gate wide open, so as to conceal himself and his companions behind it.

In rushed Sir Miers de Willoughby, at the head of a large party of his men; and out went Ralpho Proudfoot, with the two Scottish knights and their attendants. The gate was hastily locked externally; the horses were quickly gained, and mounted in the twinkling of an eye; and Ralpho Proudfoot, who had taken the precaution to have his steed placed with the rest, got to saddle along with them. As they rode

past the gate of the hostel of the Norham Tower, the loud voices, and the execrations of Sir Miers de Willoughby and his people, and the shrill screams of Mrs Kyle, told them that the failure of the plot had been already discovered by the actors in it.

"So," said Ralpho, in half soliloquy, as he guided the knights down the village street at a canter—"so, thou didst cease to trust me, Sir Miers, me who hath been faithful to thee to the peril of my salvation. By St Benedict, thou shalt now find that it would have been well for thee to have trusted me still; yea, and thou didst tamper with her whom I would have espoused. By the bones of St Baldrid, but thou mayest mate thee with her now an thou listest, for I am done for ever with her, with thee, and with England, except as a foeman."

The two knights made the best of their way until they had got beyond the English march, and were fairly on what might be termed Scottish ground. Armed men were still crowding in greater or lesser bodies to Jedworth, where those who had by this time assembled formed a large army. They were encamped on what was then called the High Forest; and thither the two friends were hastening, and were already but a little way from the position of the troops, when

Sir Patrick Hepborne halted, and thus addressed his companion:

"Canst thou tell me, Assueton, what may cause the mingled crowd of squires, lacqueys, grooms, and horses, that doth surround the gates of yonder church? Meseems it some convocation, and that those varlets do wait the pleasure of some personages of greater note who are within."

"Thou art right," replied Assueton; "for to-day was fixed for a council of war to be held within that church, and it would seem that at least some, if not all, of the nobles and knights of the host are already met. Let us hasten thither, I beseech thee. I long to learn what is to be the plan of our warfare."

"I shall at least meet my father there," said Sir Patrick listlessly, and as if he cared for little else. "Do thou follow us, Lindsay, to take our horses, and then wait for us, with the esquires, under the spreading oaks of yonder swelling knoll."

On entering the church, the two knights learned that they had arrived just in time for the opening of the business. The Earls of Fife, Douglas, Dunbar, and Moray, were there, and indeed all the leading nobles and knights of Scottish chivalry; and the doors being closed, the

assembly was soon deeply engaged in the gravest deliberations.

Whilst the council of war was so employed within the church, Mortimer Sang was lying at the root of an aged oak, holding conversation to, rather than with, Roger Riddel. Near them were the horses tethered and feeding, under the eyes of Robert Lindsay, and his old, though newly-recovered comrade Ralpho Proudfoot, who were earnestly engaged in talking over many a story of their boyhood.

"What dost thou stare at so, friend Riddel?" demanded Sang, who observed his comrade stretching his neck so as to throw his eyes up the trough of a ravine down which stole a little rill, that murmured around the knoll where they were sitting; "what dost thou see, I say, friend Roger, that thou dost so stretch thy neck like a heron, when disturbed in her solitary fishing?"

Roger replied not, but nodded significantly, and pointed with his finger.

"Nay, I see nought," replied Sang, "save, indeed, a swinking churl, who doth untie and lead away a gallant and bravely-caparisoned steed from yonder willow that weepeth over the stream."

Roger looked grave, and nodded again, and

looked as much as to say, "awell, and dost thou see nothing in that?"

"Nay, now that the knave hath mounted," said Sang, "he seemeth to ride like one who would make his horse's speed keep his neck from the halter. By'r Lady, he's gone already. Is the rogue a thief, thinkest thou, Roger?"

"Notour, I'll warrant me," replied Squire Riddel.

"By St Baldrid, had we but thought of that sooner, we might have frayed the malfaitor, yea, or taken him in the very fact," said Sang. "But now we are too late to meddle in the matter."

"We are no thief-takers," replied Roger Riddel, with great indifference.

"Nay, now I think on't, he who would hang up his horse so in the Borders, may be his own thief-taker for me," replied Sang; "but look ye, friend Roger," continued he, after a pause, "who may that stranger be who cometh forth from the crowd armed and spurred, yea, as a squire ought, yet who walketh away as if neither groom nor horse tarried for him? Stay—methinks he cometh this way."

The stranger looked around him, after getting rid of the embarrassment of the crowd about the church, and then moved quickly to-

wards the knoll where the two esquires were sitting, and, passing quietly under it, without either looking at or speaking to them, made his way up the ravine in the direction of the willow-trees, where the horse had been tethered. The path he followed was so much lower than the ground whence they had observed the actions of the man who took the horse, that the stranger walked smartly on for more than a bow-shot, ere he came within view of the willow-trees. Then it was that he began to betray great confusion. He hastened to the spot whence the horse had been so lately removed, and finding that he was irrecoverably gone, he clasped his hands, looked up to Heaven, and seemed to be lost in despair.

"Dost thou mark yonder man who did walk by here alone?" demanded Sang, eagerly. "Behold how he doth show signs of distress, that would mark him to be the master of the horse which the thief took. I ween he be no Scottish squire, for he knew no one, and seemed to covet concealment as he did pass us by. An I mistake not, he will prove better worth catching than the thief would have done. Let's after him, Roger, that we may prove my saying."

Roger, though slow to speak, was quick to act. The two esquires seized their steeds, and

throwing themselves into their saddles, galloped at full speed after the stranger. Startled by the sound of pursuit, he at first made an effort to escape, but seeing how hotly he was chased, he lost spirit, and, shortening his pace, allowed them to come up with him.

"Whither wouldst thou, comrade? and whence hast thou come? and what dost thou, a spurred esquire, without a horse?" demanded Sang, in a string of interrogations.

"I do but breathe the air here," replied the man, in great confusion. "As for my horse, I do verily believe some villain hath stolen him from those willow-trees where I had tied him."

"But why didst thou tie thy horse in this lone place? and how comest thou thus unattended?" demanded Sang again. "But, hay, holy St Baldrid, is it thou, my gentle Clerk-Squire Barton? When, I pray thee, didst thou leave the peaceful following of the godly Bishop of Durham, to mell thee with dangerous matters like these thou art now in? By the blessed Rood, it had been well for thee, methinks, an thou couldst but have aped somewhat of the loutish Scot in thy gait, peraunter thou mightest have better escaped remark. So, thou hast become a spy on these our Eastern Marches, hast thou? By the mass, but thou must with us to

the conclave. It doth erke me to speak it, mine excellent friend, but, by'r Lady, I do fear me that thou mayst hang for it."

"Talk not so, Squire Sang," replied Barton, with a face of alarm. "Trust me, I have seen nought—I know nought. Thou knowest we did drink together in good fellowship at Norham. Let me go, I do beseech thee, and put not an innocent man's life to peril, seeing that appearances do happen to be so sore against me."

"Sore against thee, indeed, pot-companion," said Roger Riddel, portentously shaking his head.

"Yea, appearances are sore against thee, Master Barton," re-echoed Sang. "Verily, we did behold thee as thou didst come forth from yonder church, where thou didst doubtless possess thyself of much important matter that did there transpire, the which it will be by no means convenient that thou shouldst carry in safety to those who may have sent thee hither. Better that thou hadst chanted thirty trentalls of masses in the goodly pile of Durham for the soul of thy grandmother, ay, and that fasting, too, than that thou shouldst have set thy foot for a minute's space of time within yonder church this day."

"Let me go, good gentlemen, I do beseech

ye," said Barton. "Squire Riddel, hast thou no compassion for me?"

"Much," replied Roger; "nathless, thou must with us, Squire Barton."

"Nay, in truth, thou must with us without more ado," said Sang; "yet make thyself as easy as may be; for, in consideration of our meeting at Norham, I shall do thee all the kindness I may consistent with duty, both now and when thou shalt be sent to the fatal tree, to the which I do fear thy passage will be short and speedy."

The English esquire shuddered, but he was compelled to submit; and he was accordingly led by his captors to the church, where the council of war was assembled. The news of his capture excited great interest and commotion among the knights; and the Earl of Fife, who presided over their deliberations, had no sooner learned the particulars of his taking, than he ordered him into his presence. Barton came, guarded by Mortimer Sang and Roger Riddel. He had put on the best countenance he could, but judging by the working of his features, all his resolution was required to keep it up.

"Bring forward the prisoner," said the Earl of Fife. "What hast thou to say for thyself, Sir Squire? Thou hast been taken in arms

within the Scottish bounds—thou hast been seen of several who did note thine appearance at this our secret meeting—and there be knights here, as well as those worthy esquires who took thee, who can speak to thy name and country. Whence art thou come? and who did send thee hither to espy out our force, and to possess thyself of our schemes?"

"Trusting to the sacred office of my lord the Bishop of Durham, I came but as a pious traveller to visit certain shrines," replied Barton. "Being in these parts, I wot it was no marvel in me, the servant of a churchman so dignified, to look into the church, and——"

"Nay, nay,—so flimsy a response as this will by no means serve," interrupted the Earl of Fife, who, though cool, calm, and soft in manner, was in reality much more cruel of heart than his brother the Wolfe of Badenoch himself, albeit devoid of the furious passion so ungovernable in that Earl. "He doth but trifle with our patience. Let a rack be instantly prepared, and let a tree be erected without loss of time, whereon his tortured limbs, whilst their fibres shall yet have hardly ceased to feel, may be hung as tender food for the ravens. His throat shall be squeezed by the hangman's rope. until all he hath gained by his espial be disgorged or closed up for ever within it."

Barton shook from head to foot at this terrible sentence, uttered with a mildness and composure, that might have suited well with a homily. His face grew deadly pale, despair grappled at his breath, and he gasped as if already under the hands of the executioner. His eyes restless and protruded, seemed as if anxious to shun the picture of the horrible death that so soon awaited him. His lips moved, but they were dry as ashes, and they gave forth no sound. Sang and Roger Riddel almost regretted that they had been instrumental in bringing the wretch there, though by doing so they had so well served their country. They looked at each other with horror; but in such a presence, and at such a time, Sang was condemned to remain as dumb as Squire Riddel. The good Earl of Moray had more liberty of speech, and he failed not to use it.

"Be not too hasty with him, my lord," said he; "he may yet peraunter be brought to give us tidings of the enemy. Let him but give us what information he can, under promise, that if it be found soothfast, he shall have no evil. Meanwhile, after he shall have effunded all that it may concern us to know, let him be delivered into the custody of the Constable of Jedworth, with him to liggen in strict durance,

until we shall have certiorated ourselves by our own experience, whether the things which he may tell be true or false, with certification that his life shall be the forfeit of the minutest breach of verity. If he doth refuse these terms, then, in the name of St Andrew let him incontinent lose his head."

A hum of approbation ran around the meeting, and the Earl of Fife, though in secret half-chagrined that he had not had his own will, saw that in this point he must give way to the general voice.

"Thou dost hear thy destiny," said he to the prisoner; "what is thine election?"

"My lord, seeing that I have no alternative but to yield me to dire necessity," answered the English esquire, with an expression of infinite relief in his countenance, "verily, I do most gladly accept your terms. As God is my judge, I shall tell thee all I know, without alteration, addition, or curtailment."

"Who sent thee hither, then?" demanded the Earl of Fife.

"Being one to whom these Marches be well known, I was chosen by the Lords of Northumberland, and sent hither to learn the state of your enterprise; as alswa to gather which way ye do propose to draw."

"Where then be these English lords?" demanded the Earl of Douglas.

"Sirs," replied the captive squire, "sith it behoveth me to say the truth, ye shall surely have it. I be come straight hither from Newcastle, where be Sir Henry Piersie, surnamed Hotspur, from his frequent pricking; and his brother, Sir Rafe Piersie, yea, and divers other nobles and knights, flowers of English chivalry, all in readiness to depart thence as soon as they may know that ye have set forward into England, for, hearing of the strength of your host, they do not choose to come to meet you."

"Why, what number do they repute us at?" demanded the Earl of Moray.

"Sir," replied the esquire, "it is said how ye be forty thousand men, and twelve hundred spears."

"What, then, may be their plan?" demanded the Earl of Fife.

"This be their plan, my lord," replied the esquire: "If ye do invade England by Carlisle, then will they straightway force a passage for themselves by Dunbar to Edinburgh; and if ye do hold through Northumberland, then will they enter Scotland by the Western Marches."

As the English esquire Barton was thus de-

livering himself, the Scottish lords threw significant glances towards each other. Some farther questions of less moment were put to him, and after he had answered to all with every appearance of perfect candour,—

"Let him be removed into the strict keeping of the Constable of Jedworth," said the Earl of Fife. "His life and liberty shall be safe, provided his report shall in all things prove true, and for this I do gage my word, in name of myself and all these noble lords and knights here present. Should he be found to have spoken falsely in the veriest tittle, he knoweth his fate."

After the prisoner was withdrawn under the charge of a guard, the Earl of Fife conveyed thanks to the two esquires for having so well fulfilled their duty to Scotland. The assembled lords and knights were overjoyed that the intent of their enemies should have been thus made so surely known to them, and a buzz of congratulation arose.

"This is all well, my lords," said the Earl of Fife, after having again procured silence; "but let us now to council, I entreat you, that we may straightway devise how best to avail ourselves of the tidings we have gained. For mine own part, I do opine that we should break

our host into two armies. Let the most part, together with all our carriage, go by the Cumberland Marches and Carlisle, and let a smaller body draw towards Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to fill up and occupy the attention of the enemy assembled there. I speak under the correction of wiser heads," continued the Earl, bowing around him with great condescension, so as to excite a burst of approbation from those weaker spirits whom he daily flattered until he made them his stanch partizans,—" I speak, I say, under the correction of wiser heads; yet meseems, from those unanimous applauses, my lords, that you do honour my scheme of warfare with your universal support; and such being the case, I may now say, that whilst I do myself propose to lead the main army by the Western Marches, I shall commit the command of the smaller body to the brave Earls of Douglas, Dunbar, and Moray. For this last service, methinks, three hundred lances, and three thousand crossbows and axemen, may well enow suffice."

" By St Andrew, but 'tis a fine thing to know how to keep one's head safe," whispered Sir William de Dalzel ironically to Sir Patrick Hepborne the younger; " what thinkest thou of him who shall shoulder ye a catapult to crush

a swarm of dung-flies, whilst he doth send out others to war on lions and bearded pards with a handful of hazle-nuts. Depardieux, he who goeth by Carlisle may march boldly from one end of Cumberland to the other, with a single clump of spears at his back, ay, and take the fattest spoil too; but he who shall march to Newcastle will want all the hardy hearts and well-strung thewes and muscles he can muster around him, and is like after all to get nought but a broken head for his journey. Holy St Giles, but 'tis well to take care of one's self."

By a little management, the opinion of the council of war was easily brought perfectly to coincide with the views of the Earl of Fife. But so great was the name of James Earl of Douglas, that it was in itself a host. The two brothers, George Dunbar Earl of Dunbar and March, and John Dunbar Earl of Moray, too, were so much beloved, that a puissant band of knights voluntarily mustered under their banners. Among these were Sir Patrick Hepborne, his son, and Sir John Assueton. Ere the assembly dissolved, it was determined that the armies should divide and march on their respective routes early on the ensuing morning; and all was bustle and preparation accordingly.

CHAPTER II.

The smaller force, under the Douglas, broke up from Jedworth, and set forward in high spirits, cheered by the good countenance and presence of their renowned commander. Their parting shouts were re-echoed from the sides of the surrounding hills, and were replied to with yet louder bursts of acclamation by the large army of which they had been so lately a portion. Their route lay through the wilderness of the forest which at that time covered the country, and they soon lost even the cheers of their departing comrades, that, mellowing by degrees, at last died away among the hollow valleys. On entering Northumberland, the Earl of Douglas allowed little time for pillaging the country, but stretched forward with the utmost expedition, so that he might carry the war directly into the heart of the bishoprick of Durham, before his movements could be made known to the Earl of Northumberland, who was at Alnwick, or to his two sons, who were at that moment patiently waiting at Newcastle, with

the other English lords, for the return of their spy.

The Douglas was by no means one who could endure to make a mere empty show of invasion, for the purpose of creating a diversion that might smooth the way of his politic brother-in-law the Earl of Fife. His force was small, indeed, but he resolved that it should do England as much harm as he could effect with it. Passing the river Tyne, therefore, at some distance above Newcastle, he spread his troops over the fair county of Durham, and began taking an awful, nay, a tenfold revenge, for the miseries which the Merse had so lately endured at the hands of the English, by carrying devastation far and wide.

The news that the Scots were abroad at last reached Newcastle and Durham, and their numbers being exaggerated, these towns were filled with great consternation. They now learned the tale, indeed, from the evidence of their senses, for the smoke of the continued conflagration, creeping heavily over the country, and, carrying the smell of combustion along with it, poisoned the very air of both these places. Having reached the gates of Durham, the Douglas found them firmly closed against him; so, after skirmishing there for some days, he pushed on, destroying everything in his way, even to the

very gates of York, and leaving no town unburnt that was not sufficiently walled to require a regular siege.

Having thus more than made good a chivalric vow with which he had started, that he should see Durham ere he returned, and having already ventured farther into a hostile country than his small force warranted, he returned towards Newcastle, industriously perfecting any destruction that he had before left unfinished; and having re-crossed the Tyne, at the same spot where he had passed it in his way southwards, he set himself down before the town on the side lying towards Scotland. The place was strongly garrisoned, and contained the flower of the chivalry of the counties of York, Durham, and Northumberland;—for as soon as it was fully known that the Scots were abroad, and that they had already passed onwards into Yorkshire, a general rising of the country took place, under the influence of Harry Piersie, lately appointed keeper of the Northumbrian Marches; and orders were even dispatched to the governors of Berwick, Norham, and the other fortresses now in rear of the enemy, to join the general muster with what force they could spare without too much weakening their garrisons.

Sir Rafe Piersie had long ceased to think of Eleanore de Selby. His passion was like the

summer-storm, violent in character, but short in duration. His father, the haughty old Earl of Northumberland, had heard of it, and had signified his unqualified displeasure that his son should have even thought of a marriage with the daughter of a mere soldier; while his elder brother, the lively and peppery Hotspur, had laughed and railed at him till he became tired of the very name of De Selby. Part of this feeling arose from an honourable cause. His conscience told him that he had permitted his violent temper to make him forget what was due to the courtesy of knighthood, and he now so deeply repented him of his conduct at Norham, where he had so grossly insulted his host, that the scene never occurred to his mind without bringing the blush of shame to his cheek. He longed for an opportunity, where, without debasing himself, he might prove these feelings to Sir Walter; and the issuing of the order for the Border Captains to appear at Newcastle being the first that presented itself, he immediately availed himself of it.

"Brother," said he to Hotspur, "as for Sir Matthew Redman of Berwick, he is a stout and able Captain, and in his own person a powerful aid. But what wouldst thou, I pray thee, with bringing the old Captain of Norham so far from home?"

"Dost thou fear to meet him, Rafe?" cried Hotspur, with a sarcastic smile; "or wouldst thou rather that I should send for his dark-eyed daughter hither?"

"Nay, nay, brother," replied Sir Rafe; "but methinks he is of years somewhat beyond the battle-field."

"Thou mayst do with him as thou listest, brother Rafe," replied Hotspur, who was too busy to waste time on such a matter; "but we must have his men."

Armed with Sir Henry Piersie's authority to do so, Sir Rafe dispatched an especial messenger to Sir Walter de Selby, to assure him that it revived him much to be the instrument of procuring his exemption from personal attendance at Newcastle, which to one who had already seen so many fields, must be rather irksome. The messenger found Sir Walter de Selby lately recovered from his bodily malady; for the death of the wizard Ancient and his villainy being now known to him, he again enjoyed comparative peace of mind. But he was much enfeebled by the shocks he had received. He heard the courier to an end; and the moisture in his eye, with the nervous motion in his closed lips, showed how much he was affected by it.

"Am I then deemed to be so old and worth-

less?" said he, after a pause. "The time was when the Marches, neither East nor West, could have turned out a starker pricker;—yet was it kind in Sir Rafe Piersie, after what hath passed between us, and tell him, I beseech thee, that I so felt and received his message. But it shall never be said that I am behind when others are in the field; it shall never be said of old Sir Walter de Selby, who hath worn the hauberk and morrion from his cradle, that he was afraid to die in knightly harness. No, no; let Tom Turnberry prepare my war steed; I'll lead mine own spears to Newcastle. To thee, my good Lieutenant Oglethorpe, do I commit the keeping of old Norham. It is King Richard's now. See that it hath no other master when I or King Richard demand it of thee."

With these words, the brave old warrior gave orders for his men to assemble immediately, and mounting, with the aid of his esquires, he rode from the court-yard at the head of his force, on a mettlesome horse, the fiery paces of which but ill suited with his years; and as he went, he joined feebly in the parting cheer with which his brave bowmen and lances took leave of their comrades.

It was the daring spirit of chivalry, more than any great hope of taking the town, that induced the gallant Douglas to tarry for two

days before Newcastle. The most powerful thirst of heroic adventure then prevailed, and those within the town were as eager to rush beyond their ramparts to meet the assailants, as the Scottish knights were to assault them. Both days, therefore, were occupied in a continued succession of skirmishes; and it was a remarkable feature of this warfare, that it seemed to be more regulated by the courtesy of the tournament, than guided by the brutal and remorseless rage of battle. No sooner did a body of lances show itself from within the Scottish lines, than another of equal numbers appeared from behind the barriers of the town, prepared to give it a meeting. Spurring from opposite sides, the combatants encountered each other midway, as if they had been in the lists. A desperate shock took place, followed by a melée, in which prodigious feats of arms were done, whilst the English from their walls, and the Scottish troops from their temporary entrenchments, alternately cheered their friends, as one or other side gained the advantage. But, what was most wonderful, everything resembling atrocity appeared to be banished from the field, and mercy and generosity so tempered victory, that it was difficult to say whether the contest was greatest for glory in the skirmish, or for superiority in

clemency, and every other noble feeling, after it was over.

On the evening of the first day, the Lord Douglas, to give the troops a breathing, ordered the place to be assaulted by means of scaling-ladders, with the hopes of perhaps surprising it by a coup-de-main. The Scottish troops rushed to the walls with their usual hardihood, and Sir Patrick Hepborne and Sir John Assueton were found in the very front of the attack made by the Earl of Moray's division. Although they were provided with fascines and trusses of straw to throw into the ditch, yet the ladders were in general found to be too short for surmounting the walls. At one place, however, they were successfully applied; and the two knights, followed by their esquires and some few others, gallantly mounted in the teeth of the enemy, and fought their way into the town, driving the English before them; but being unsupported, owing to the failure of the escalade in other quarters, they were unwillingly compelled to retreat, which they and their followers did. bravely fighting with their faces to the enemy. Having gained the spot where they had climbed, the two friends planted themselves side by side firmly in front of it, to cover the retreat of those who were with them, and gallantly kept

a whole host of foes at bay, until all who had entered the place with them had descended, except their trusty esquires, and two other individuals whom they had not leisure to note. The ladders had all been broken or thrown down in the confusion except one, and the English so pressed upon the little knot of Scotchmen, that it appeared impossible for so many of them to escape.

"One desperate charge at them, Assueton," cried Hepborne. "Our safety depends on driving them back for a brief space's breathing. On them, brave Scots!"

The two knights raised a shout, in which they were joined by their fellow-combatants, and with one accord rushed furiously against the dense circle of English. The effect was tremendous. Many were overthrown by the vigorous blows of the knights and their assistants, but more by the press and confusion occasioned by the panic, excited by the belief that they were backed by a fresh assault of troops from without the walls. There was a momentary dispersion of them, but the individuals of the Scottish party were also separated from each other, and as Sir Patrick Hepborne returned to the rallying point, he was grieved to discover his friend Assueton lying wounded and helpless on the

ground. He immediately stooped, to endeavour to set him on his legs, but he was unable to support himself.

"Leave me, dear Hepborne," said Assueton faintly, "thine own safety depends on thy doing so."

"Leave thee, Assueton!" cried Hepborne with energy; "nay, by St Baldrid, if I cannot bear thee hence, I will perish with thee. Clasp thine arms round my neck, my friend," added he, as he lifted him up from the ground, and began carrying him towards the walls. "Be of good cheer, and tighten thy grasp; thou dost thereby lighten my burden."

As he moved off the English returned, shouting upon his heels, with Sang sullenly retreating before them.

"Succour, succour, my trusty esquire," cried Hepborne; "I have a life here to preserve dearer to me a thousand times than mine own."

Sang came up to him as he reached the top of the only remaining ladder. To the esquire he hastily confided the care of Assueton, and turning on the foe, again drove them before him, so as to give Sang leisure to descend with his burden; and then hastily returning to the spot where the ladder was, he discovered that it was broken, and saw Sang in the ditch

beneath, endeavouring to extricate himself and the wounded knight, from the bundles of straw and fascines among which they had fallen. The enemy were fast gathering behind, and he had no alternative. Selecting a place where the heaps in the ditch were highest, he sprang from the wall, and happily alighted almost uninjured.

Whilst he and his squire were busily employed in lifting Sir John Assueton from the ditch, their attention was attracted to the walls above them, where a desperate struggle was going on between two figures distinctly seen against the sky. But it was of short duration.

"Uve, uve! an she wonnot let her go, by St Giles, but she shall go wi' her," cried Duncan MacErchar who was one of them; and griping his enemy fast, he sprang with him over the battlements.

Duncan had by no means time to be so select in the choice of the spot where he was to alight as Sir Patrick Hepborne had been. But he took care to leap with his antagonist before him, and his doing so was the saving of his life, his fall being broken by the body of the wretch who participated in it, and who was crushed to death against the very bottom of the ditch,

whilst Duncan, though stunned, escaped with some considerable bruises, and immediately regaining his legs, assisted Sir Patrick and his esquire to carry off Sir John Assueton to the Scottish camp.

We have already apprised the reader that the brave knights were supported by two other individuals besides their esquires. One of these, it may be guessed, was the brave MacErchar. The other, when the little party was dispersed after their bold onset, unfortunately missed his way in attempting to return to the rallying point, and being assailed by a crowd of his foes, was compelled to retreat before them, until he was stopped by a wall, under which he took shelter, and prepared himself for a desperate resistance.

"Yield thee, Scott," cried some of the first who came up to him. "On him—seize him," cried a dozen of them at once.

"By St Lowry, 'tis right well for ye Southrons, to cry yield to ane honest Scotchman. But troth, I'll tell ye it's easier to say so to ane o' my country than to gar him do it; and mair when ye speak to the henchman o' the Yearl o' Moray himsell," cried Rory Spears; for it was he, no longer clad indeed in his fishing coat and otter-skin cap, but armed as became the

Earl of Moray's henchman, and wielding a long pole-axe instead of his gaudclip.

"Take him alive," cried an officer who was present; "let not his life be taken, as you value your own. If he be of the Earl of Moray's household, we may be the better for knowing some of his secrets."

"Troth, ye'll hae ill taking o' me without taking my life too, my lads," said Rory, swinging his pole-axe so cleverly around him, that no one was disposed to risk approaching him.

"In on him and take him, his ransom will be great," cried the officer; and thus encouraged, one or two of the hardiest did venture to attempt to close on him, but they paid dearly for their daring, being prostrated to right and left like so many nine-pins. The rest were so scared that they scrupled to approach him; and he might have kept them off long enough, had not a man who had climbed on the wall behind him suddenly dropped down on his shoulders à califourchon, and brought him headlong to the ground.

"Well done, Tom Turnberry," cried a dozen voices at once, and in an instant Rory was overpowered, and hastily dragged down a stair and thrust into a dark dungeon under the

ramparts, where he was left to his own reflections.

"Is there ony ither poor deevil like mysell here?" demanded Rory aloud, after he had in some measure recovered his breath; but finding that no one answered, he went on to talk to himself. "Na,—nae answer. Aweel, Maister Spears, thou are here, art thou, amang the foundations o' Newcastle? This is seeing merry England wi' a vengeance. Troth, after a', if this is to be the upshot, thou mightest as weel hae turned back frae Norham yonder. Thou canst be of nae satisfaction to the Yearl whiles thou art liggen here, I trow. And as to ony mair comfort or consolation in the wars, thou mayest e'en bid them good-day, for thou'lt hae nae mair o' them, I'll promise thee. By my troth, an thou hadst not seen this day's fighting, thou mightest hae been as well liggen on the rocks at the Ess. Aweel, aweel—it is most surprising how a man o' sense wull gae wrang at times. Hadst thou no been a fool, ye might hae let thae wud chiels climb the wa's o' Newcastle themlanes, that is, taking thy time o' life into consideration. But holy St Mary, what wull become o' poor Kate?—Hoot, the Leddy o' Norham wull surely see her sent safe back to Tarnawa; though in conscience

I had rather been her guide mysell. I was a fool to leave the damosel. And then, St Lawrence protect me, how I wull be missed at hame." The thought of his daughter, of his wife, and of his home, grappled Rory by the heart, so that he did nothing but sigh for some moments.—"Aweel," continued he at length, "I maun say, after a', that albeit there is a great pleasure in fighting, it is but a fool-thing for God's rational creatures to be cutting ane anither's throats as if they war wild-cats or wolf-beasts. What for sould I come a' the gate frae Findhorn-side to cleave the skull o' some poor honest deevil o' the Tyne here, against whom, as I hope for mercy mysell, I hae no decent or wiselike cause o' quarrel?—War is a fool-thing; but I wull say there is some pleasure in't after a'."

"Ay!" said a long yawning voice from a deep recess in the dungeon.

"St Lowry defend us, wha's that?" cried Rory.

"One Roger Riddel," replied the voice.

"What hast thou been doing, that thou hast been so long silent?" demanded Rory.

"Sleeping," answered Roger.

"Thou art esquire to that brave Knight Sir John Assueton, if I err not?" said Rory.

"Thou art right," replied Roger.

"And how, in the name of St Andrew, camest thou here?" demanded Rory.

"By being taken," replied Roger.

"Thou wert on the ramparts with us to the last," said Rory.

"I was," replied Roger.

"By St Giles, but it was a noble escalade, comrade, an we had only been weel backed," cried Spears with enthusiasm.

"Noble," cried Roger in the same tone.

"Didst thou mark how the knaves fled afore sax o' us?" cried Rory. "Sax against twa hundred o' them at least."

"Nay, three hundred, brother," replied Roger.

"Ay, faith, that may be," said Rory; "I'll no dispute as to that. There might be three,—ay, or four hundred o' them, for I had no great leisure to count them. But this I ken, neebour, that an it hadna been bigget ground, thou and I souldna hae been here."

"No, that I'll promise thee," replied Roger.

"Where art thou, comrade? Gie's thy hand; we fought like brave chields thegither," cried Rory in great glee, and groping about for Squire Riddel. "Thou art a prince of brave fellows."

"And thou art a very king," replied Roger, shaking him heartily by the hand.

"'Tis a pleasure to meet thee, though it be

in this dungeon," cried Rory. "Would we had but some yill to wet our friendship. St Lowry grant that we had but a wee sup yill."

"Ay, would indeed we had a drop of ale," re-echoed Roger with a deep sigh.

At this moment steps were heard descending, a light glimmered faintly for a moment through a chink beneath the door, and the key being turned, the round rosy visage of Master Thomas Turnberry, the squire equerry of Norham, appeared within it. He entered, bearing a lamp in his hand, and was followed by an attendant, who carried an enormous pasty, that had been just broken upon, and a huge stoup of ale.

"Soh!" said Master Turnberry; "put thee down these things, and let the gentlemen eat and drink. Having put a man into captivity by mine own hard riding, I do think it but consistent with charity to see that he starveth not. Yea, and albeit I am but a soberish man myself, yet do I know that there be others who love ale; and having mortal bowels of compassion in me, I have pity for the frailties of my fellow-men."

"Sir," said Rory, lifting the vessel with great readiness from the ground, "an thou hadst been St Lowry himself, thou couldst not have ministered to my present wants more cheering-

ly. I drink to thee from the bottom o' my soul. ——Hech!" cried he, after having swallowed half the contents of the vessel, with the nicest measurement, and most scrupulous justice to him who was to come after him; "hech, 'tis most invigorating to the very spinal marrow. It must be allowed that ye do brew most excellent nut-brown to the south o' the Tweed."

"Excellent indeed, judging by its good sale," cried Roger Riddel, looking into the flagon before he put it to his head; then nodding to Master Turnberry, he drained it to the bottom.

"By'r lackins, but ye have good go-downs, my masters," cried Turnberry, taking the flagon, and raising the bottom of it, so as to show that it was empty, and at the same time betraying some disappointment. "Methinks I could have tane a drop of ale myself. But there be more where this came from. See that the gentlemen lack for nothing," said he, turning to the attendant. "And so, good night, my merry masters."

It was about the middle of the ensuing day that Rory Spears was sitting indulging in soliloquy, Roger Riddel having retired to the farther part o' the vault, where he had thrown himself down, and buried himself among the straw, to sleep away the time.

"I ha'e sat for days by mysell, as a relay to watch for the deer," said Rory—"ay, and I ha'e lain for weeks by my lane, watching the saumonts loupin', without hearing voice save the water-kelpy roarin' in the Ess—yet was I never sae tired as I am at this precious moment, sitting in this hole, wi' a bit chink yonder aboon, just enew to let a poor deevil ken that it's daylight, and that he mought be happy thereout i' the sun. As for that chield, Roger Riddel there, my ain Oscar wad be mair companionable, I wot. He lies rucking and snorting there as composed as if he were in the best hostel in a' bonny Scotland. As St Lowry kens, I wad be content to be in its warst, rather than whare I am. Holy St Mungo, the chield hath buried himsell like a very mouldiwort; I can see nought but his nose. Aweel, an I could only gie ower thinking o' Alice, and Kate, and the Yearl o' Moray, I mought peraunter sleep mysell."

As he was stretching himself along the bench where he had been sitting, with the resolution of trying the experiment, he was disturbed by a coming step. The door opened, and an officer entered in great seeming haste.

"Thou art a body attendant of the Earl of Moray, art thou not?" said he, glancing at Spears.

"Yea, I am the noble Yearl's henchman, as I mote say," replied Rory.

"Doubtless thou knowest well the person of the Lord Douglas?" said the officer.

"Ay, weel do I that," replied Rory; "and mair, he hath a great good-wull to me, for mony is the time we ha'e hunted thegither. Is he not my master the Yearl's brother-in-law?"

"Follow me then without loss of time," said the officer; "Sir Henry Piersie would have conference with thee."

Rory said no more, but joyfully obeyed; and the officer, too much occupied with his errand to investigate things closely, and having no suspicion that the place contained two prisoners, tripped up the stair that led from the dungeon, leaving the door open behind him.

Master Roger Riddel was not asleep; he had only dosed, to save himself the trouble of forming replies to the incessant talk which Rory had carried on; so peeping out from his straw after the officer and his fellow-prisoner had left him, and seeing the door of the dungeon wide open, he slowly raised himself up, walked out of the place, and ascended the short winding stair, from the top of which he quietly emerged into the pure air. With the utmost composure, he then struck into one of the lanes that led from

the walls, and walked coolly down a street, through crowds of anxious individuals, all of whom were too busily occupied, with anticipations of glory or of defeat, to notice a man in the attire of a squire, of whom there were many. Following a crowd that was pressing forwards, he reached the gate. There was a muster at the barriers.

"Where are thy weapons, Sir Squire?" demanded a spearman as he passed by.

"Lend me thy lance, good fellow," said Roger; "I am in haste—here be money to get thee another."

The man gave him the spear, took the money, and thanked him; and Roger went on. At the gate stood three horses held by a single groom. Roger went boldly up to him.

"Thou waitest thy master, friend?" said he in a tone of inquiry.

"Yea; and what be that to thee?" replied the fellow surlily.

"Because I have got an angel for thee, and I would know if thou be'st the right man," replied Riddel.

"Give it me straight, then, good master," said the man eagerly.

"Nay, that will I not, neither straight nor

crooked," replied Riddel; "that is, not till I know thy master's name from thee, that I may know whether in very deed thou be'st the man I do look for."

"'Tis Sir Robert Ogill that be my master," replied the man.

"Then art thou the very good fellow I would speak with," said Roger. "Give me that roan as fast as may be, and this angel here is the token thy master Sir Robert sent thee. I ride on business of his to the barrier."

Without more ado, and without interruption from the groom, he leaped into the saddle, and riding by the guards at a careless pace, got beyond the barriers, and put his horse to speed for the Scottish camp. A shout was raised among a party of spearmen who were forming without, and some dozen or two of them spurred after him; but he had gained so much start of them, and his horse was so good, that he escaped in spite of all their exertions, and got fairly within the lines occupied by his countrymen.

CHAPTER III.

As the Earl of Douglas was sitting in his pavilion, in conversation with his chaplain, Richard Lundie, on the second day of his being before Newcastle, a squire in waiting announced to him that one of Lord Moray's men wished to have a private interview with him.

"Give him entrance speedily," said the Douglas; "his business may be of moment. He seeth me in private when he seeth me alone with him who knoweth mine inmost soul."

The squire bowed and retired, and immediately returned to introduce—Rory Spears.

"Rory Spears!" exclaimed the Douglas; "what hath brought thee hither, and what hath my brother of Moray to tell my private ear through thy mouth? Thou art not the messenger he is used to send between us for such affairs. Were it matter of wood or river craft, indeed, we might both recognise thee as a right trusty and merry ambassador; but at this time

we have other game upon our hands. What hath Lord Moray to say?"

"My Lord Yearl o' Douglas, naebody kens whare goud lies till it be howkit out," replied Rory, with an obeisance. "Albeit that thou and the Yearl o' Moray, my noble master, have never yet discovered my talents that way, it proveth not that I do lack them. He who is stranger to the soil may chance to divine that, the which he who owneth it hath never dreamt of; and he——"

"What doth all this tend to, Rory Spears?" demanded the Earl of Douglas, interrupting him rather impatiently. "Trust me, though I may have trifled with thee at Tarnawa, this is no time for such idlesse."

"Bide a wee, my Lord Yearl, bide a wee," said Rory, with great composure; "call it not trifling till thou art possessed of the value of what I have to effunde unto thee. I was going to tell thee, that he who doth own a man like me, ay, or a horse beast, for instance, may ken less o' his qualifications than he who doth see him but for a gliff."

"But what hath all this to do with thy message from Moray to me?" cried the Douglas.

"Nought at all, my Lord Yearl," replied Rory, "for I ha'e no message frae him. But,"

added he, assuming an unusual air of importance, "it hath much to do, I rauken, with the confidential ambassage the which I am at this moment charged with by the Hotspur."

"The Hotspur—Thou charged with a message from the Hotspur!—How can that be? Quick—try not my patience longer; where hast thou encountered the Hotspur?" exclaimed the Douglas eagerly.

Rory proceeded to give the Earl a sketch of the history of his capture, as well as of his being sent for by Sir Harry Piersie.

"He telled me, my Lord Yearl o' Douglas," continued he, "that he heard I confessed mysell to be ane esquire o' the Yearl o' Moray's. I did na daur to contradick Hotspur, the mair because I am in a manner the Yearl's henchman. 'I hae made yelection o' thee,' says he to me, 'as the fittest man for my job amang a' the Scottish prisoners in Newcastle. Thou art to bear a message of importance frae me to the gallant Douglas. Tell him, Hotspur hath had the renommie o' his prowess rung in his lugs till the din hath stirred up his inmost soul, and made his very heart yearn to encounter sae mockell bravery. Yet hath my evil fortune so willed it,' quoth he, 'that though I have sought him unceasing for these two days, yet have I

never had the chance to meet him hand to hand.' "

"Nay, and God wot, I have not been wanting in my search after the noble Hotspur," replied Douglas with energy. "But what said he more?"

"'Get thee to the Douglas, Sir Squire,' said he to me. 'Tell him that I do entreat him, for the love he bears to chivalry, that he may so order his next assault that I may not fail to meet him in person. Be the manner and terms of our encounter of his own fixing, and let him trust to the word of a Piersie for their fulfilment on this side, as I shall to the unbroken faith of a Douglas. Bear this to him, Sir Squire, and take thy liberty and this golden chain for thy guerdon.' "

"Bravo, Harry Hotspur!" cried the Douglas, rising from his seat, whilst his eyes flashed fire from the joyous tumult of his heroic spirit; "bravo, brave heart! trust me thou shalt not lack thy desire. Quick—let me hasten to reply to the gallant Piersie's challenge with that promptness the which it doth so well merit. My most faithful and attached Lundie," continued he, addressing his chaplain,—"get thee to the provost, if thou lovest me, and use thy good judgment to choose me out from among

our English prisoners, one who may be best fitted for being the bearer of mine answer. Let him be an esquire, for we would rather surpass than fall short of Hotspur's courtesy."

"Nay, an ye would surpass the courtesy of the gallant Hotspur," said Rory, who stood by, "ye maun e'en send him a knight, for he did send thee ane esquire,—ay, and an esquire with a golden chain round his craig."

"Right," cried the Douglas in the fulness of his joy,—"right, Squire Rory Spears; for esquire thou shalt hereafter be, sith it hath pleased Harry Piersie to make thee so. And if a knight is not to be had, by St Andrew I'll make one for the purpose of this embassage."

"Hear ye, Maister Ritchie Lundie," cried Rory; "I take thee witness, that my Lord the Yearl of Douglas hath allowed me the rank the which the noble Hotspur did confer on me when I did act as his ambassador. Let not this escape thy memory."

"Fear thee not, Rory Spears," said the Douglas; "I shall myself see that thine honours shall be duly recognised."

Lundie soon returned with an English esquire, selected from among the prisoners. The Earl of Douglas made Rory repeat over in his

presence the message of which he had been the bearer from Hotspur.

"And now, Sir Squire," said Douglas, "thou hast heard the wish of thy gallant leader, the noble Hotspur. Be thou the bearer of mine answer. Tell Sir Harry Piersie, that for a man to have oped his eyes at noon-day without beholding the light of Heaven, would have been as easy as to have had ears without their being filled with the renowned achievements of the flower of English chivalry. The Douglas burns to meet him; and that time may in no wise be lost, but each forthwith have his desire, tell him that the Douglas will be on the field anon with fifty lances. Let Sir Harry Piersie come forth with a like number at his back, and let this be the understanding between the parties, that both escorts halt within view of each other, and that both knights singly run a career with grounden spears at the outrance, the knights to be left to themselves. Be thou, I say, the bearer of these terms and conditions; but ere thou goest vouchsafe me thy name."

"My name is Thomas Scrope, so please thee, my lord," replied the esquire.

"Within there," said the Douglas; "call in my knights and officers. And now, Sir Squire," said he, after the pavilion was filled,

and he had given some necessary orders, "kneel down on this cushion, that before this brilliant knot of Scottish chivalry I may do due honour to him who is to bear my message to the Hotspur." The English esquire obeyed. The Douglas ordered a pair of golden spurs to be buckled on his heels by the hands of the two eldest Scottish knights present. They then belted him with a magnificent sword, a gift from the Earl, who immediately bestowed on him the accolade, saying,—

"I dub thee Knight, in the name of God and St Michael; be faithful, bold, and fortunate. And now rise up, Sir Thomas Scrope."

Astounded and confused with this unlooked-for honour, the newly-created knight but awkwardly received the congratulations which poured in on him from those present. The Douglas himself conducted him to the door, where a noble horse, fully caparisoned, awaited him.

"Get thee to saddle then, Sir Thomas Scrope," cried he, "and tarry not till thou hast possessed the Hotspur of our reply to his message. Say more,—that if he liketh not the terms, let him name conditions of his own, to the which I do hereby agree par avance; and let me have

them forthwith, for in an hour hence I shall be in the field in front of these lines. God speed thee, Sir Thomas."

"Might it not have been better, my lord," said Richard Lundie, after they were again alone, "might it not have been better, to have taken a new sun to gild so glorious a combat? The day is already far spent."

"Yea, it is so," replied the Douglas; "but to-morrow we move hence from this idle warfare, and I would not willingly go without proving the mettle of the gallant Hotspur, so 'tis as well that his impatience be gratified."

"The bruit of the coming encounter spread like wild-fire through the camp, and the whole chivalry within its circuit pressed forward to be admitted of the chosen band who were to witness the onset of the two bravest knights in Christendom. Lord Douglas's difficulty was how to select, so as to avoid giving offence, and he required all his judgment to manage this. Sir Patrick Hepborne had the good fortune to be one of those who were admitted into the honourable ranks.

When the gay little cohort of mounted lances were drawn forth in array, and the Douglas's banner was displayed, the stout Earl sprang on a powerful black war-horse, that had neighed and

pranced whilst he was held by two esquires, but that became quiet and gentle as a lamb when backed by his heroic master. The whole Scottish line turned out to gaze, and shouts of applause arose that re-echoed from the walls of Newcastle. Immediately afterwards Sir Harry Piersie appeared before the barriers of the town, mounted on a milk-white steed, and as Douglas even at that distance could perceive that his escort was of similar strength and description to his own, he had the satisfaction of thinking that the terms he had proposed had been accepted. The fortifications were soon covered by the garrison, who crowded to behold the combat, and the Scottish cheers were loudly returned by the English. A trumpet call from the Piersie band was instantly returned by one from that of Lord Douglas; who immediately gave the word for his knights to advance, whilst he rode forward so as to gain a position about fifty yards in front of them, that he might be the better seen by the opposite party. Having brought up his escort to a point sufficiently near (as he judged) for the arrangement agreed on, he halted them, and ordered them to remain steady, whilst he continued to approach until he came within a due distance for running his course against Hot-

spur, who had also come forward a considerable way before his attendants.

The trumpets from both bands sounded nearly at once as if by mutual consent—both knights couched their lances—their armed heels made the blood spring from the sides of their coursers—and they flew like two thunderbolts towards the shock. Anxious suspense hung on both sides as they were stretching over the field, and the silence of the moment was such that the full crash of the collision entered every listening ear, however distant. Loud and exulting cheers from the Scottish lines, which, though they came so far, altogether drowned the uncouth sounds of dismay that ran along the walls of Newcastle, proclaimed the success of the Douglas, whose resistless arm, nerved with a strength that few men could boast, bore the no less gallant Hotspur clean out of his saddle, though, owing to his adroitness in covering his person against his adversary's point, he was hardly if at all wounded.

The band of English knights who attended him, forgetting the nature of the combat, as well as the express orders they had received from Piersie, saw their adored leader on the greensward, and thinking only of the jeopardy he lay in, began shouting—" Hotspur, Hot-

spur, to the rescue!" and ere the bold Douglas could well check the furious career of his horse, he was in the midst of a phalanx of his advancing foes. Abandoning his ponderous lance, he grasped the enormous mace that hung at his saddle-bow, and bestirred himself with it so lustily, that three or four of the English chevaliers were in as many seconds dashed from their seats to the earth, in plight so grievous that there was but little chance of their ever filling them again. But the throng about the hero was so great, and their blows rained so thickly and heavily upon him, that his destruction must have been inevitable, long ere his own band could have reached him, had not the noble Hotspur, whom some of his people were by this time carrying hurriedly away, called out to the knights of his party, in a voice of command that was rarely disobeyed,—

"Touch not the Douglas—harm not a hair of his head, as ye would hope for Heaven. What, would ye assault at such odds the brave Douglas, who hath relied on the word of a Piersie? Shame, shame on ye, gentlemen. Your zeal for Hotspur's safety came not well at this time for Hotspur's honour. Trust me, his life stood in no peril with so chivalric a foe."

Awed and ashamed by these chiding words,

the English knights fell back abashed, and made way for the valiant Douglas, who emerged from among them like a hunted lion from among the pack of puny hounds who have vainly baited him.

"Halt! chevaliers," cried he, rising in his saddle, and raising his right arm, as he in his turn addressed his own band, who were pouring furiously down on the English knights, shouting, "Douglas, Douglas, to the rescue!" "Halt," cried he again, "halt, in the name of St Andrew! Let the gallant Hotspur retreat in peace. I blame not him for this small mistake of his trusty followers, the which, after all, was but an excusable error of affection. And as for thee, Piersie, I thank thee for thy courtesy. Depardieux, thou hast proved thyself to be brave as honourable, and honourable as brave. Can I say more? By the honour of knighthood, thou hast proved thyself to be Harry Piersie, and in that name all that is excellent in chivalry is centred. The chance hath been mine now; it may be thine anon, if it do so please Heaven. Get thee to refresh thyself, then, for we shall forthwith beat up thy quarters with a stiffer stoure than any thou hast yet endured."

"Douglas," cried Piersie, who was by this time remounted, "Douglas, thou art all, and

more than all that minstrels have called thee. Farewell, till we again meet, and may our meeting be speedy."

With these parting words, the two leaders wheeled off with their respective bands.

Immediately after the Earl of Douglas had returned to the camp, a council of war was held, and, after a short deliberation, preparations were made for instantly assaulting and scaling the fortifications. The army was drawn out from its entrenchments, and was led to the attack arranged in three divisions. The Earl of Douglas, attended by the little chosen band of knights who had that day vowed him their especial service, led on the central body directly against the barriers. The right and left wings, commanded by the Earls of Dunbar and Moray, marched on steadily, to attempt the storm of the walls at two several points on each side of the gates, in defiance of a heavy shower of arrows from the English bowmen, mingled with some weightier missiles from the balistæ, which sorely galled them, and which they could but ill return with their crossbows. Each of these flanking divisions covered the approach of a number of wains, laden with hay and straw collected from the neighbouring country; and so soon as they had come near enough to the

fortifications, a signal was given, the wains were brought suddenly forward, and hurled one over another into the ditch, so as in many places to fill it up, and admit of the ladders being raised against the wall with great success. The Scottish soldiers rent the air with their shouts, and wielding their destructive battle-axes, rushed like furies to the escalade. But the English were so well prepared, and defended themselves so manfully, that they beat back the assailants at every point, and soon succeeded in setting fire to the combustible materials in the ditch, by throwing down lighted brands, so that all hope of forcing an entrance in that way was soon at an end.

Meanwhile the Douglas forcibly assaulted the wooden barriers that defended the entrance to the town; and Piersie and his chivalry, who were immediately within them, no sooner heard the war-cry of "Douglas, Douglas! jamais arriere!" than, collecting themselves into one great body, they rushed out on the Scottish forces with so resistless an impetus, that nothing could withstand the fury of the stream. Douglas and his troops were borne away like trees of the forest before some bursting torrent. But no sooner had the English spread themselves out upon the plain like exhausted waters, than the

voice of the Scottish hero was heard above all the clang of the battle, cheering his men to the charge, and his superb figure, exalted on his black courser, was seen towering onwards against the slackening foe, gathering the firmest Scottish hearts around him as he went.

The English now in their turn gave back; but Harry Piersie, recovered from his stunning fall, mounted on a fresh roan, and surrounded by the brave knights by whom he was formerly attended, restored their courage both by his voice and example. Shouts of "Piersie, Piersie!" and "Douglas, Douglas!" arose from different parts of the field, and were re-echoed from the walls. At length the two leaders caught a glimpse of each other amid the volumes of smoke that, tinged by the setting sun, were rolling along the ground from the blazing straw, which the descending damps of evening now hardly permitted to rise into the air.

"Ha, Douglas, have I found thee at last?" cried Piersie, turning towards him.

"Trust me, 'twas no fault of mine that we met not sooner, Harry Piersie," cried Douglas, spurring to encounter him with his mace, his lance having been shivered in the melée.

There was time for no more words. Piersie ran his lance at the Douglas as he came on,

who with wonderful dexterity turned it aside, and catching it in his hand, endeavoured to wrench it from its owner. Piersie's embroidered pennon was waving from the spear-head. Douglas snatched at it, but his adversary disappointed him, by forcing up the point, and each retaining his grasp, they were now drawn together into close contact. The little silken trifle, utterly worthless in itself, glittered like a child's bauble over their heads; but if it had been a kingdom they were contending for, they could not have been more eagerly set on the contest. Each forgetful of the defence of his own life, put forth all his strength and skill, the one to obtain what he considered so glorious a prize, and the other to keep what he thought it would be so disgraceful to lose, and what, moreover, he so much valued, for the sake of her whose taper fingers had interwoven its golden threads. The struggle was strong, but it was short in duration, for the iron hands of Douglas snapt the slim ashen shaft in twain, and in an instant he held up the broken lance, and waved the pennon triumphantly over his head.

"The Piersie's pennon!—recover the Piersie's pennon!" was the instant cry, and the

English crowded to assist Hotspur, led on by Sir Rafe Piersie.

At that moment a body of Scottish lances, headed by Sir Patrick Hepborne, came pouring down in tremendous charge, shouting "Douglas, Douglas!" and dividing the two combatants as they swept onwards, they bore away the Piersies and the English before them to the very barriers, where the press of the combat was so hot, that they were soon compelled to retreat within their palisadoes, and to close up their defences. The partial breathing of an instant ensued, during which Douglas looked eagerly for Hotspur, and at length having descried him over the pales,—

"By St Andrew," he cried, rising in his stirrups, and again waving the captured pennon high in air, "I have good reason, Harry Piersie, to be thankful for the glorious issue of this bicker. Trust me, I value this pennon of thine above all the spoil of Newcastle, nay, or of an hundred such towns. I shall bear it with me into Scotland, fair sir, in token of our encounter; and in remembrance of thy prowess, I do promise thee it shall grace the proudest pinnacle of my Castle of Dalkeith."

"Be assured, Douglas," replied Piersie courteously, though with manifest signs of great

vexation, "ye shall not bear it over the Border; nay, ye shall not pass the bounds of this county till ye be met withal in such wise that ye shall make none avaunte thereof."

"Well, brave sir," replied the Earl of Douglas, "it shall be set up before my pavilion this night; so come thither to seek for thy pennon, and take it thence if thou canst; till then, farewell."

The Lord Douglas turned away, proudly bearing his trophy, and the night now approaching, and all hopes of succeeding in the assault being at an end, he ordered the retreat to be sounded, and collecting his forces, he retired behind his trenches.

The Scottish troops were no sooner withdrawn, than Hotspur, smarting under the stinging disgrace of the loss of his pennon, summoned a council of war, in which he bravely proposed to lead on the English troops to a night attack against the Scottish entrenchments. This proposition was warmly supported by Sir Rafe Piersie, who participated largely in his brother's injured feelings; but an opinion prevailing among the English knights, that the Earl of Douglas's party was but the Scottish vanguard, and that the large army, of which they had heard so much, was hovering at no great dis-

tance, ready to avail itself of any imprudent step they might take, very generally opposed his wishes.

"Sir," said the prudent Seneschal of York, who was present, and who seemed to speak as the organ of the rest, "there fortuneth in war oftentimes many chances. Another day, thou mayest gain greater vantage of Earl Douglas than he hath this day won of thee. Let us not peril the cause of England for a paltry pennon, when the power of Scotland is abroad. Who knoweth but this empty skirmish of theirs may be a snare to lure us out to destruction? Better is it to lose a pennon than two or three hundred brave knights and squires, and to lay our country at the mercy of these invading foemen."

Though some of the young and impetuous, and even the old Sir Walter de Selby, showed symptoms of being disposed to support the plan proposed by the Hotspur, yet this prudent counsel was so generally applauded, that, though boiling inwardly with indignation at their apathy, he was compelled to yield with the best face he could, while his lip was visibly curled with a smile of ineffable contempt for what he considered their pusillanimity.

"What a horrow flock of craven pullets,

brother Rafe!" said he, giving way to a burst of passionate vexation after the council had broke up, and they were left alone:—"What, a paltry pennon, saidst thou, Sir Seneschal? May thy tongue be blistered for the word! Depardieux, were it not unwise to stir up evil blood among us at such a time, I would make him eat it, old as he is, and difficult as he might find the digestion of it. Oh, is't not bitter penance, brother Rafe, for falcons such as we are to be mewed up with such a set of grey geese? By Heaven, it is enough to brutify the noble spirit we do inherit from our sires. What will the Douglas, I pr'ythee, think of Harry Hotspur, now that after all his vaunts, he cometh not out to-night to give him the camisado in his tent, and to pluck his pennon from the disgraceful soil in the which it doth now grow so vilely? But, by St George, though I should be obliged to go with no more than our vassals, I will catch the Douglas ere he quits Northumberland, and I will have my pennon again, or die in the taking of it."

The Douglas was well prepared to have given Harry Piersie a welcome, had circumstances enabled him to have paid his visit to the Scottish camp before they broke up from Newcastle. The sentinels were so stationed that the whole

army would have been alarmed and under arms in a few minutes. His sleep was therefore as sound as if he had been in his own Castle of Dalkeith, though he slept in his armour, that he might be ready to meet the foe on the first rouse.

"Well, my trusty esquires," said he to Robert Hart and Simon Glendinning, as they came to wait on him in the morning, "doth Harry Piersie's pennon still flutter where these hands did place it yesternight?"

"Yea, my good lord," replied Glendinning, "thy challenge hath gone unheeded."

"Nay, then, we bide no longer for him here," said Douglas; "an he will have it now, he must follow after us to take it. Are my Lords Moray and Dunbar astir?"

"They are, my lord," replied Hart.

"Go to them, then, Robert, and tell them, that with their leave, we shall march anon. But, by St Andrew, there shall be no appearance of unseemly haste. Let the sun, that saw the Piersie's pennon planted yesternight ere he did go to bed, be suffered to look upon it for some time after he be well risen again, so that we may not be accused of being more dexterous in carrying off our prey than bold in defending it."

The little Scottish army broke up from their

encampment with as much composure as if they had been in a friendly country, and marched leisurely off, with loud cheers. Harry Piersie was on the wall, and his blood boiled at the very sound.

"By the holy St Cuthbert, they mock me," cried he, his face flushing with anger; "ay, and well may they too," continued he, striking his forehead. "Oh, I could leap over these walls from very despite. By the mass, their numbers are naught; see how small their columns appear; already the last of them are gone; oh, is it not enow to drive me to madness!"—and dashing his mailed foot to the ground, he turned away to gnaw his nails with vexation.

After taking two or three turns with his brother along the rampart, he suddenly called for an esquire, and ordered him to procure some intelligent scouts; to these he gave orders to follow the Scottish line of march, and to bring him frequent and accurate intelligence of their numbers, their route, and all their actions; and having taken this precaution, he and Sir Rafe Piersie continued to pace the walls by themselves, giving vent, from time to time, to their indignation and disappointment, in abrupt sentences addressed to each other. During that day and the evening following it, large rein-

forcements of troops poured into Newcastle, from different quarters of the circumjacent country; and the stronger Hotspur found himself, the more impatient he became to make use of his strength.

"Ay, ay, see where they come; see where they come, brother Rafe," said he in a pettish tone. "But what come they for, an we have them not in the field? Depardieux, from the careless guise and strutting gait of some of these butter-headed burghers, and clod-pated churls, meseems as if they came more to parade it in a fair than to fight."

"If we can but get them once into the field," said Sir Rafe Piersie, "by all that is good, we shall teach the knaves another bearing and another step."

"Ay, marry, would that we but had them in the field, indeed," replied Hotspur; "the very smell of battle hath a marvellous virtue in it, and doth oftentimes convert the veriest dolt into a hero. Of such fellows as these men, one might make rare engines for recovering a lost pennon, yea, as well as of finer clay. Would we but had them at the proof. But a plague upon these cautious seniors of the council, methinks my patience was miraculous; nay, in truth, most miraculous, to hear that old drivel-

ler talk of my paltry pennon, and not to dash my gauntlet in his teeth for the word."

"Nay, I could hardly keep my hands down," cried Sir Rafe Piersie. "Methinks our blood must be cooling, or else even his age should have been no protection."

"'Tis better as it is, Rafe," replied Hotspur; "but why tarry these scouts of mine? I shall fret me to death ere they return. Why are we not blessed with the power of seeing what doth pass afar off? Had I this faculty, how would mine eyes soar over the Douglas and my pennon!"

In such talk as this the brothers wasted great part of the night. The impatient Hotspur was kept in suspense until next morning, when, much to his relief, the arrival of the wearied scouts was announced to him. He ordered them instantly into his presence, and having closely interrogated them, he soon gathered from them all the intelligence he wanted.

The Earl of Douglas had marched slowly and circumspectly, and although his little army had sufficiently marked its course, by plundering and burning whatever came in its way, the troops had not been suffered to spread far to the right or left. They halted at Pontland, and took and burnt the town and castle, making

prisoner of Sir Aymer de Athele, who defended it. Thence they marched to Otterbourne, where they encamped, apparently with the intention of besieging the castle of that name next day. The scouts also brought certain information, that the Scots did not amount to more than three thousand men-at-arms, and three or four hundred lances, and that the main body of the army was nowhere in the neighbourhood, but still lying indolently on the Western Marches. Full of these particulars, Hotspur, with a bounding heart, again summoned the council of war, and bringing in his scouts, he made them tell their own story.

"What say ye now, gentlemen?" cried he with a triumphant air; "was I right, or not? By the Rood, I was at least wrong to listen to the cold caution of some few frozen heads here; for, an I mistake not, the general voice of the council of yesterday was with me. We mought have spared these Scots many a weary mile of march, I ween. By St George, they were a mere handful for us, a mere handful; not a man of them should have escaped us; ay, and such a price should they have paid for the ruin they have wrought on these fine counties, that Scotland should have quaked for a century at

the very thought of setting foot across the Border."

"Frozen heads, didst thou say, Sir Harry Piersie?" demanded the Seneschal of York calmly; "methinks that thy meaning would be to accuse those frozen heads of being leagued with frozen hearts; but let me tell thee, Hotspur, where snow is shed on the poll we may look for a cool judgment; and if a cool, then probably a wise judgment."

"Pshaw!" said Hotspur, half aside to his brother; "this fusty utterer of worn-out saws and everyday wisdom goadeth me beyond all bearing; yet must I temper mine answer.—Trust me, I meant not to impeach thine ordinary judgment, Sir Seneschal," continued he aloud, "though I do think that it did for once err grievously in our yesterday's council. But let us not talk of this: I am now here to tell ye, gentlemen, that by the faith I owe to God, and to my lord my father, go who list with me, I shall now go seek for my pennon, and give Lord Douglas the camisado this night at Otterbourne; yea, by St George, though I should do it without other aid than that of my brother Rafe, and the faithful vassals of the Piersie. What, am I to put up, think ye, with the loss of my pennon, and the disgrace of our

house and name? By Heaven, though it were but a hair's-breadth of the hem of my lady's mantle, the Douglas should not carry it into Scotland. But if disgrace doth attend the losing of Hotspur's pennon, depardieux, let it be borne by those, who, calling themselves his friends, will not yield him their help to retake it; for Hotspur is resolved to wipe off shame from himself: he will follow his pennon to the Orcades, yea, pluck it from their most northern cape, or fall in the attempt. Disgrace shall never cleave to Hotspur."

"No, nor to Rafe Piercie neither," cried his brother. "Let those who fear to follow stay at home. We shall on together, hand in hand, and seize the pennon, though grim death held its shaft; yea, paltry as it may be thought, it shall be the sun on whose beams our dying eyes shall close. Let us on then."

The loud murmurs of applause which arose from among the younger knights, manifested how much they sympathised with the feelings of the Piersies. But the old Seneschal of York again put in his word of prudence.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I see that, in speaking, as I must do, I shall have but few to agree with me, yet must I nathless freely speak my mind, more especially as I do perceive that

those knights who, like myself, have seen more years of warfare than the rest, do seem disposed to think with me. I must confess, that albeit some potent reasons do now cease to war with your opinion, mine is but little altered. Meseems it still an especial risk to move so far from garrison after an uncertain enemy, for a mere shred of silk and gold."

"A shred of silk and gold!" exclaimed Sir Walter de Selby. "What, dost thou not think that all England is disgraced by this triumph of the Scottish Douglas over the Hotspur? And, dost thou regard nought but the shred of silk and gold? Talk not of the old ones, I pray thee, Sir Seneschal of York. Trust me, old as is Sir Walter de Selby, he shall never rest idle whilst gallant deeds are adoing to wipe off a foul stain from the name of England. Be it death or victory, he shall have his share on't."

"Thy hand, my brave old soldier," cried both the Piersies at once.

"Thou shalt go with us," exclaimed Hotspur; "though thine years might have well excused thy leaving thine own Castle of Norham, yet hast thou come hither; yea, and thou shalt now forward with us to the field, were it but to show how the noble fire of a warlike soul may burn through the thickest snows of age."

"Nay, then," said the Seneschal of York, "thou shalt see, Sir Harry Piersie, that albeit I do advise caution, yet shall I do my part as well as others, when my words do cease to avail aught; yet would I fain have thee tarry until thou art joined by the Bishop of Durham, who is looked for with his force this night."

"What, while we can muster eight thousand good soldiers without him, and six hundred gallant lances? Shall we wait for the Bishop, and so permit the Scots to 'scape from our vengeance? Nay, nay, let's to horse, my brave friends; my heart swells at the thought of reaping so glorious a field; let's to horse without delay, if your blood be English."

Hotspur's call was hailed with loud approval, and the brave though cautious Seneschal, seeing that it was in vain to urge more, joined heartily with the rest in getting the army under arms, and in hastening the march.

The Scots had begun to sound their bugles at an early hour that morning, and to assault the Castle of Otterbourne, and they wasted the whole of the day in unsuccessful attempts against it. A council of war being held in the evening, it was found that there were cautious heads among the Scotch as well as among the English knights. Some of those who spoke were

of opinion, that they should abandon all further attempts against the Castle, and march forward towards Scotland. But the Earl of Douglas opposed this.

"What, my brave lords and knights of Scotland," cried he with energy, "would ye give Harry Piersie cause to say that we have stolen this pennon of his? Let us not creep away with it like thieves in the dark; nay, rather let us show these Southrons that we do earnestly covet their promised visit to us. Let us, I pray ye, tarry here for some two or three days at least; we shall find occupation enow in beleaguering and taking of this Castle hard by, the which is assuredly pregnable to bold and persevering men, and will yield us the more honour that it be strong. Then shall Hotspur have leisure to bethink himself how he may best come to fetch his pennon; and if it should so list him to come, depardieux, he may take my banner, too, if he can."

The old and the cautious hardly in secret approved this counsel; but so much was the heroic Douglas the idol of all, that his wishes were of themselves enough to determine the resolution of those who heard him. Measures were accordingly taken for securing the army against surprise, and for rendering their camp

as strong as circumstances would allow; and seeing that they were to remain for so much longer a time than they at first imagined, the soldiers hastily threw up huts, composed of sods and branches of trees, to give them better shelter. The baggage-wains and baggage, with the wainmen, sutlers, and other followers of the army, were stationed so as to block up the approach to the camp; and their position was so defended by morasses and woods flanking it on either side, as to render it almost unassailable. At some distance from this the troops were encamped on the slope of a hill, and the wooded rising grounds on either hand contributed to form defences, which left it open to attack nowhere but in front, and even there only after the outwork, formed by the baggage at a distance in the meadow below, should be broken through.

Earl Douglas said little to those around him, but made his various dispositions with the cool and skilful eye of an expert commander. He surveyed the ground with thoughtful attention, as the sun was setting bright on the hill. It glanced upon Piersie's pennon, that fluttered as if idly impatient of its captivity beside the large banner of Scotland, the heavy drapery of which, drooping to the ground in ample folds, hung in

silent and majestic dignity, unruffled by the gentle evening breeze. He thought on the Hotspur and his threats—on the violence and impotence of man's passions—on the actual insignificance of the object which had so stirred up himself and Harry Piersie, compared with the number and value of the lives of those who might soon be called on to fight for it to the death. He mused on the peaceful quiet that now hung over the scene, and of the change that in a few short hours it might undergo; on the change, above all, that might affect many of those brave hearts which were now beating high with the pulses of life, eager to return to their native soil, and to fulfil schemes of future happiness, never perhaps to be realized.

"There is something solemn and grand in the stillness of this lovely evening," said the Douglas at last to the Earl of Moray, who was with him. "The parting radiance of day in yonder western sky might make us fancy that the earth was yblent with heaven. Why might we not pass to that long-wished-for country on those slanting rays of glory, without intervening death, or the penitential pains of purgatory?"

"'Tis a whimsical conceit, brother," replied Moray with a smile; "but why, I pray thee, are thy thoughts so employed at a time like this?"

"I will tell thee," said Douglas gravely. "I know not why it is, but my memory hath been at this time visited by the recollection of a strange dream I once had, and which, long forgotten, doth now arise to me afresh with all its circumstances. Methought I was sitting on a hill-side, when, all at once, I beheld a furious battle on the plain of the valley below. One side was led by a figure, the which I was conscious bore striking resemblance to mine own. He rushed to the fight, but was quickly pierced with three lances at once, and fell dead on the field. Dismay began to fasten on his army, and defeat appeared certain, when the dead corpse of the knight arose, and, towering to a height tenfold greater than it had when alive, moved with the solemn step of the grave towards the foe. The shout of victory arose from those who were about to yield, and their enemies were dispersed like chaff before the wind, when the giant figure and all vanished from my fancy's eye."

"Strange!" cried Moray, his attention grappled by this singular communication from the Douglas.

"Thou canst never believe me to be a driveller, Moray," continued Douglas, without noticing his brother-in-law's interruption, "far less one whom the approach of death may af-

fright. Death must succeed life, as the night doth follow the day, and we who can know little how much of our day is gone, must be prepared to couch us decently when and where the night doth overtake us."

"Nay, Douglas," said Moray, again interrupting him, "I well wot that those grave sayings of thine are anything but the offspring of a quailing heart; I know that they are begotten by thy dauntless and well-grounded courage, that doth accustom itself to survey death at all times, in thought as well as in field, till thou hast converted his grim image into the familiar figure of a friend. Yet why should such thoughts find harbour with thee now? Harry Piersie, if he do come at all for his pennon, will hardly be here to-night."

"I think not of the Piersie," said Douglas, taking Moray's hand, and warmly pressing it between his, while a tear glistened in his manly eye,—"I think not of the Piersie or his pennon; but promise me now, when mine hour hath come, and I shall have gloriously fallen in battle, as I well trust may be my fate, that thou wilt yield thine especial protection, and thy love and cherisaunce, to my widowed Margaret. I need not tell thee what she hath been to me. Our brother-in-law Fife is cold, and calculating, and

politic, yea, and heartless. He doth aim at the Regency, and he will doubtless gain his end. Margaret is his much-loved sister, while she is the proud wife of Douglas; but trust me, little of her brother's sunshine will fall upon her widow's weeds. Be it thine, then, to be her prop and comfort. I well know that the warmth of thy Marjory's love will go hand in hand with thee. I am a man, Moray—we are both men—why should we be ashamed of a few tears shed at a moment like this?"

"Nay, but, Douglas, why shouldst thou talk thus?" said Moray. "Fate may call for my life first, and then thou wilt have those very duties to perform for Marjory, the which thou dost now claim from me for her sister."

"Nay," replied Douglas, with ominous seriousness of aspect—"Yet be it so," said he, after a pause; "do thou but listen to my sad humour. Mine attached Lundie doth well deserve thy care; see that he do meet with that advancement his piety to God and his devotion to me have so well merited. And then, as for my gallant Archibald, my brave esquires Hart and Glendinning, and my faithful shield-bearer Hop Pringle, they have already carved out shining reputation for themselves; yet do thou never let it be forgotten that they have been faithful followers of the Douglas."

"Canst thou believe that the name of Douglas can ever lose its potent charm?" exclaimed the Earl of Moray with energy, yet deeply affected; "or canst thou doubt that to me thy will must ever be a sacred law? But why should we now talk of matters so sad?" continued he, endeavouring to rally his own spirits as well as those of Douglas; "the banquet doth abide us in thy pavilion yonder, and the lords and knights of Scotland do doubtless wait for thee there, in obedience to thine invitation."

"I had forgotten," said Douglas, resuming his usual cheerful countenance. "Let us then attune our spirits to mirth and joyous manly converse, sith that we have discussed these melancholy themes. Allons, let us to the banquet —such banquet as the rude cookery of the field may furnish."

It was at this time that Rory Spears, having collected a little knot of his friends about him, thus addressed them:

"Captain MacErchar, and you, most worthy esquires, Masters Mortimer Sang and Roger Riddel, yea, and you, brave Robin Lindsay and Ralpho Proudfoot, and the rest, who are nobly ettling to rise by your deeds as others hae done afore ye—ahem—panting after that most honourable honour and dignified dignity of ane

esquire, I do hereby invite ye all to go down wi' me to the baggáge-camp and sutlerages, whar we may find comfortable and cozy houf in a braw new-bigget sodden hostel, yereckit for the accommodation o' Dame Margaret MacCleareye's yill-barrels and yill-customers, and there, at my proper expense, to eat the bit supper I bid her prepare as I came up the hill, and to drink till ye hae weel wet the honours, the which, descending on mine unworthy head from the gallant Hotspur, (whose health we shall not fail to drink, albeit we may yet hope to hae the cleaving o' his skull,) have been approven of by our noble Lord of Douglas, and by mine especially dear Lord of Moray, for both of whom we are not only bound to drink to the dead, but to fight to the dead."

"Oich, hoich, Maister Spears, surely, surely —he, he, he!" cried MacErchar.

"Bravo, Master Spears, I shall willingly go with thy squireship," cried Sang; "nay, and never trust me an I do not my best honour to thine entertainment."

"Squire Spears, I am thine," cried Roger Riddel; and the rest all heartily joining in ready acquiescence in his invitation, they followed Rory joyously down the hill in a body.

CHAPTER IV.

Rory Spears was presiding with joyous countenance over the supper to which he had invited his friends—the more solid part of the entertainment had been discussed—and the ale-jug had already performed several revolutions, to the great refreshment and restoration of the strength of those who partook of it, when the jovial companions were suddenly disturbed in their revelry, by a very unusual cry from some of the sentinels posted along the line of entrenchment that protected the baggage-camp. The hilarious esquires and men-at-arms were silenced in the midst of their mirth, and sat looking at one another with eyes of inquiry. But they sat not long so, for the cry was repeated, and ran rapidly along the chain of sentinels.

"By St Lowry, it's the English, as I'm a Christian man!" cried Rory Spears. "My troth, it was maist ceevil of the chields to wait

till we had souped; nathless, it erketh me to think that they carried not their courtesy so far as to permit us to drink but ae ither can. Yet, by the Rood, we shall have at it. Here, Mrs MacCleareye,—d'ye hear, gudewife?"

"Phut, tut!—oich, hoich!—fye, fye, let us awa, Mr Spears," cried Duncan MacErchar. "Troth, she'll no wait for us, the Southern loons."

"Hark again," cried Sang; "by all that is good, they will be in on us in the twinkling of an eye."

"Let's out on them, then, without farther talk," cried Rory, brandishing his battle-axe. "Troth, I wad maybe hae had mair mercy on them, an they had gi'en us but time for ae ither stoup; but as it is, let's at them, my friends, and let them take care o' their heads."

"Pay for the supper and yill, Maister Spears," cried Mrs MacCleareye, thrusting herself forward.

"This is no time, woman, to settle sike affairs," cried Rory.

"Better now, I trow, than after thou art amortised by the sword o' some Southron thrust through thy stomach, Master Spears," said Mrs MacCleareye. "Pay to-day, I pray thee, and have trust to-morrow."

"Nay, of a truth, we have no time to stand talking to thee, good woman," cried Rory impatiently; "had it been to drink mair yill, indeed, I mought ha tholed it; but, holy St Barnabas, an thou dost keep us much longer, there will be guests in thy hut who will drain thy casks without filling thy pockets. Let me past: Rory Spears's word, though that of an esquire only, is as siker as that o' the best knight in the land. Thou shalt be paid after the skrimmage. Nay, I'll no die, woman, till thou be'st paid, so fear thee not—and stand out o' my gate, I tell thee."

With a turn of his wrist, Rory shoved Mrs MacCleareye aside. She was jostled by Sang, who followed; and her round and rolling person was fairly run down by MacErchar, who was pressing hastily after them. The rest sprang impetuously over her. The cries now came more distinctly upon them, mingled with the clash of weapons.

"The English, the English!—Piersie!—The English!" were the words now distinguishable.

"To the trenches, my friends; not a moment is to be lost," cried Mortimer Sang.

"Blow, blow!" cried Roger Riddel; and Rory putting to his mouth an old hunting-bugle that hung from his shoulder, blew a shrill and

potent blast, that awakened the very echoes of the hills.

"Let us disperse ourselves through the baggage-lines, and rouse up the wain-men, and varlets, and the other camp-followers," cried Rory Spears, after taking the bugle from his mouth.

"Thou art right, Rory," said Sang; "we may do much to support the guard. Let Riddel, and I, and some others, hasten to the entrenchments, to keep up spirit among those who may now be fighting, with the hope of speedy aid, and do thou and the rest quickly gather what force ye may, and straightway bring them thither. The point of assault is narrow. If we can keep back the foe, were it but until the main body of the army be alarmed, should our lives be the forfeit, they would be bravely spent, for we might be the saving of Scotland's honour this night."

"Ralpho Proudfoot, companion of my youth," cried Robert Lindsay kindly, "we have striven together for many a prize; now let our struggle be for glory."

"Away, away," cried Sang; and he and Riddel sprung off to the trenches, followed by Lindsay and Proudfoot, whilst Rory hied him away at the head of the others, all blowing their horns, and shouting loudly through the

lines, as if the whole Scottish army had been there, and ready to turn out. The huts were soon deserted. Such as they met with in their way they collected together, and armed as fast as they could with whatever weapons lay nearest to hand; and in a very short time, these few intelligent and active heads had assembled a force, neither very numerous nor very well appointed, it is true, but, when headed by men so determined, amply sufficient to defend a narrow pass between marshes for a considerable time, especially against assailants who were awed by the conviction, favoured by the darkness, that they were attacking the camp where the whole Scottish army were lodged.

While things were in this state in the baggage-camp, the banquet in the pavilion of Lord Douglas was going on with all that quiet and elegant cheerfulness of demeanour, beseeming a party chiefly composed of the very flower of Scottish chivalry. The talk was of the love of the ladies, and the glories of tilts and tournaments. Sir Patrick Hepborne was seated between Sir John Haliburton and Sir William de Dalzel. With the former of these knights he recalled some of the circumstances of their friendly meeting at Tarnawa, and the Lady Jean de Vaux was not forgotten between them. Sir

William de Dalzel changed the theme to that of the challenge which had passed between the Lord Welles and Sir David Lindsay. Then Sir David Lindsay himself and several others joining in the conversation, it gradually became general around the board. Sir William de Keith, the Marshal of Scotland, displayed his consummate learning on the subject of such challenges between knights; and Sir John de Gordon, Lord of Strathbolgy—Sir John Montgomery—Sir Malcolm Drummond, brother-in-law to the Douglas, as well as to the Scottish champion, who was the person most concerned in the debate—Sir Alexander Frazer of Cowie, and many others, spoke each of them ably as to particular points. The Douglas himself then delivered his judgment with clearness and precision, and the attention with which his words were listened to, showed how valuable they were esteemed by those who heard them. After this topic was exhausted, the Earl was indefatigable in ministering to the entertainment of his guests, by ingeniously drawing forth the powers of those around him; and his deportment was in every respect so much more than ordinarily felicitous, and so perfectly seasoned by graceful condescension, that all at table agreed he never had charmed them more; and that as

he was the hardiest warrior of all in the field, and the most resistless lance in the lists, so was he by far the most accomplished and witty chevalier at the festive board.

The rational happiness of the evening was approaching its height, and the Douglas was occupying universal attention by something he was saying, when, to the surprise of every one, he suddenly stopped in the middle of his sentence, and turned up his ear to listen.

"Methought I heard a bugle-blast from the baggage-lines," cried he, with a flash in his eye, that denoted the utter extinction of every other thought but that of the enemy.

"Perdie, I did hear it also," cried the Earl of Moray; "nor was it strange to me. Methought I did recognise it for one of Rory Spears's hunting-mots. He doth feast his friends to-night at the sutlerage, in honour of his newly-acquired squireship, so, peraunter, he doth give them music with their ale."

"Ha! heard ye that?" cried several of the knights at once.

"Nay, there be more performers than one there," cried the Douglas, rising quickly to gain the outside of the pavilion, whilst the whole of the knights crowded after him.

"'Tis dark as a sightless pit," cried some of them.

"Yea," cried the Earl of Douglas; "but dost thou see those lights that hurry about yonder? Trust me, there is some stirring cause for the quickness of their motions."

"Hark ye, I hear distant and repeated cries," said the Earl of Dunbar. "Hark, a horse comes galloping up the hill. Hear ye how he snorts and blows? I'll warrant the rider hath ho news to tell."

"The English!—the English in the baggage-camp!—Piersie and the English!" cried the rough voice of a wain-man, who made towards the light in the pavilion, mounted on a bare-backed and unharnessed wain-horse, that heaved its great sides as if it would have burst them.

"Arm, arm, chevaliers," cried the Douglas in a voice like thunder; "arm ye in haste, and turn out your brave bands without a moment's let. Mine arms,—mine arms, my faithful esquires. My horse, my horse!"

All was now hurry, bustle, and jostling; cries, orders, oaths, and execrations, arose everywhere. Horses were neighing, and steel was clashing, and every one tried to buckle on his armour as fast as he could. Meanwhile Dou-

glas, with Moray near him, stood calm and undismayed, putting one question after another rapidly to the varlet who brought the alarm, until he had gained all the information he could expect from him.

"By the Rood, but thy new esquire Rory Spears hath well demeaned himself, brother Moray," said Douglas. "He and those with him have done that the which shall much avail us if we but bestir ourselves. Let us arm then, and get the line formed. I did well mark the ground, my friend. By skirting the woods upon our right, and if the moon will but keep below the hill-tops long enow, we shall steal down unseen upon the enemy, and pour out our vengeance upon his defenceless flank. May St Andrew grant, that thy gallant squire may but keep his own until then. Haste, haste, Glendinning. Where is Robert Hop Pringle, my brave shield-bearer? Haste thee, Hart, mine arms and my horse. Ha, Archibald," cried he to a young man of noble carriage who was passing him at the moment; "get thee my standard, my son; thou shalt bear my *jamais arriere* to-night. Part with it not for thy life: and bastard though thou be'st, show thyself at least to be no counterfeit Douglas. Quit it not even in death, boy."

From time to time, the shouts of the combatants now came faintly up the hill-side and hurried those hands that were busily engaged in arming, so that many a buckle was put awry, and many a tag was left to hang loose. The Douglas staid not to complete his harnessing, but sprang into his saddle ere he was half armed, while Lord Moray rode away to his post without discovering that he had forgotten to put his helmet on.

The night still continued extremely dark, and had not Lord Douglas taken accurate note of the ground below him whilst the light of the sun had shone upon it, he must have found it almost impracticable to have led his men on, notwithstanding that his ears were admonished by the din of the distant skirmish, and the discordant braying of at least five hundred bullocks' horns, blown by the varlets and wainmen who were not engaged; for such were in those days always carried by the Scottish soldiers, and Rory Spears had taken care that all who could not fight should at least blow, that the extent of their force might appear the greater to the enemy.

The Douglas conducted his little army with great silence and circumspection through the skirting brushwood; and it so happened, that

just as he approached the place of action, the full-orbed moon arose to run her peaceful and majestic course through a clear and cloudless sky, throwing a mimic day over the scene. Loud shouts arose from the powerful army of the English, for now they began to comprehend the actual situation of their affairs; and making one bold and determined charge, they burst at once through the whole breadth of the entrenchments, overwhelming all who attempted to stand before them. Now it was that the Scottish Earl gave the word to his men, and just as the English were pushing rapidly on towards the slope of the high ground where the Scottish camp hung glittering in the moonbeam, driving a handful of brave men before them, who were still fighting as they retired, the shout of "Douglas,—Douglas!—Scotland,—Scotland!—Douglas!—Jamais arriere!" ascended to Heaven, and the determined Scots poured from their covert out upon the open plain, and rushed against the troops of Piersie.

Confounded by this unexpected charge from an enemy whom they expected to find asleep in their tents, the English army was driven back in considerable dismay. Then might Harry Piersie and his brother Sir Rafe have been seen flying from standard to standard vainly endea-

vouring to rally their men; but it was not until they had been driven into the open ground that they could succeed in stopping what almost amounted to a flight.

"What, Englishmen,—is this your mettle?" cried Hotspur with vehemence. "Fly, then, cowards, and leave Harry Piersie to die. He may not outlive this disgrace on the standards of St George."

These upbraiding words had the effect of checking their panic, and gave them time to observe the comparatively small body to whom they were so basely yielding. The two brothers quickly restored the battle by their daring example. Deafening cheers arose, shouts of "Piersie," and "St George," being loudly mingled with them; and a fresh and very impetuous onset was made, that drove the Scottish troops entirely through their entrenchments. The struggle was now tremendous, and the clash of the Scottish axes was terrific; but although the success of the English wavered a little now and then, yet the weight of their mass was so very superior, that the Scottish army lost ground inch by inch, till, after a long contest, the Piersie found himself almost at the Scottish tents.

"Piersie,—Piersie!—The pennon of the

Piersie," cried he, shrieking with the wildest joy and sanguine with the hope of success; while, backed by a band of his choicest warriors, he made a bold dash towards the standard of Scotland, that stood before the pavilion of Douglas with the pennon beside it. The Douglas was at that time fighting in another part of the field, where the press against his men was greatest. The Earls of Moray and Dunbar were bravely striving to withstand the numbers that came against the respective wings they commanded, supported by Montgomery, Keith, Fraser, and many others. Assueton, though but half recovered from the bruise he had received at Newcastle, and Haliburton, Lindsay, and some others, were doing their best to resist the tide of English in those parts of the battle where fortune had thrown them. Sir William de Dalzel had been carried to his tent grievously wounded to the loss of an eye; and already had the brave Sir Malcolm Drummond, and the gallant Sir John de Gordon Lord of Strathbolgy fallen, covered by glorious wounds. Yet was not the standard of Scotland, nor the Piersie's captive pennon, left altogether undefended; for before them stood the dauntless Sir Patrick Hepborne of Hailes the elder, with his son by his side, backed by a small but

resolute band of their own immediate dependants.

"My brave boy," cried the elder knight, "trust me there is nowhere in the field a more honourable spot of earth to die on than that where we do now stand."

"Then we quit it not with life, my father, save to drive the Piersie before us," cried his son.

"Piersie,—Piersie!—Piersie's pennon!—Hotspur's pennon!" cried those who came furiously on to attack them.

The father and the son, with their little phalanx, remained immovable, and receiving them on the point of their lances, an obstinate and bloody contest took place. Harry Piersie and his brother fought for the fame of their proud house, and their eager shouts were heard over all the other battle cries, as well as above the clashing of the weapons, and the shrieking of the agonised wounded, as they were trodden under foot and crushed to death by the press; but the bulwark of lion hearts that defended the standard was too impregnable to be broken through. Piersie's men already began to slacken in their attack, and to present a looser and wider circle to the Scottish band; and now the elder Sir Patrick Hepborne, sec-

ing his time, and eager to catch his advantage, brandished a battle-axe, and his son following his example, they joined in the cry of "A Hepborne, a Hepborne!" and charged the enemy so furiously at the head of their men, that Piersie and his followers were driven down the slope with immense slaughter. The axes of the bold knight and his son never fell without the sacrifice of an English life. "A Hepborne, a Hepborne!" they cried from time to time, and "A Hepborne, a Hepborne!" was returned to them from those who ran together to their banner; and yet more and more of the English line gave way before the accumulating aid that crowded after Sir Patrick and his son, who went on gradually recovering the lost ground, by working prodigies of valour.

Whilst the Hepbornes were so manfully exerting their prowess in one part of the field, the Douglas was toiling to support the battle where it was most hopeless. The great force of the enemy had been accidentally directed to the point where he fought, although they knew not against whom they were moving. The dense body opposed to him so encumbered him, that his men were unable to stand before it, and defeat seemed to be inevitable. Finding himself hampered on horseback, he retired a little back,

and leaping from his horse, and summoning up his gigantic strength, he seized an iron mace, so ponderous, that even to have lifted it would have been a toil for almost any other individual in the field, and swinging it round his head, he threw himself amidst the thickest of the foe, bearing ruin and death along with him. At every stroke of the tremendous engine he whirled, whole ranks of the English were levelled before him, like grass by the scythe of the mower; and he strode over the dead and dying, down a broad lane cleared through the densest battalions that were opposed to him. Terror seized upon the English, and they began to give back before him. On he rushed after their receding steps, reaping a wide and terrible harvest of death, and strewing the plain with the victims of his matchless courage and herculean strength. From time to time he was hardily opposed for a few minutes by small bodies of the enemy, that closed together to meet the coming storm, unconscious of its tremendous nature. But his resistless arm bore away all before it, until, encountering a column of great depth and impenetrability, the hero was transfixed by no less than three spears at once.

One entered his shoulder between the plates of his epaulière; another, striking on his breast-

plate, glanced downwards, and pierced his belly; and the third easily penetrated his thigh, which in his haste had been left without the cuisse. For a moment did the wounded Douglas writhe desperately on the lance shafts, to rid himself of their iron heads, which had so suddenly arrested his destructive progress. But fate had decreed that his glorious career should be terminated. He received a severe blow on the head; his muscles, so lately full of strength and energy of volition, now refused to obey his will, and he sank to the ground, borne down by those who had wounded him, and who knew not how noble and how precious that life's blood was, to which they had opened so many yawning passages of escape.

His brother-in-law, Sir David Lindsay, and John and Walter Saintclaires, ever the tried friends of the Douglas, and a few others, who had been fighting along with him before he thus plunged from their sight into the midst of his foes, took advantage of the terror which his onset had occasioned, and followed bravely in his course, until accident led them to fall in with the stream of victorious Scots who were pouring onwards under the triumphant Hepbornes. Recognising each other, and joining together with loud cheers, they swept away

all that ventured to oppose them. They had cleared the plain ground of the enemy for several bowshots before them; the English battalions had been thinned and dispersed over the ground, and the Scottish troops were urging after them without order, when Sir Patrick Hepborne the younger, with Lindsay and the Saintclaires, who were pushing forward together, saw before them the brave and good Richard Lundie, sorely wounded, yet boldly bestriding the body of a warrior, and dealing death with a battle-axe to every Englishman who ventured to approach within his circle. Those who still contended with him quickly fled at their approach, and then, to their great grief, they discovered that it was the noble Douglas who lay weltering in his blood. He had not fallen alone, for his faithful esquires, Simon Glendinning and Robert Hart, lay near him, both covered with mortal wounds, and already lifeless, surrounded by heaps of the slaughtered foe. His gallant natural son, too, the handsome Archibald Douglas, faithful to the trust reposed in him, though severely wounded, and bleeding helplessly on the grass, still held his banner with the grasp of death.

"How fares it with thee, Lord Douglas?" cried Sir John Saintclaire, overwhelmed with

grief at the sad spectacle before him, and hastening to assist the others in raising him up.

"Well, right well, I trow, my good friends," replied Douglas feebly, "seeing that I die thus, like all my ancestors, in the field of fame. But let not the death of Douglas be known, for 'a dead man shall yet gain a glorious field.' Hide me, then, I pray thee, in yonder brake; let some one rear my standard, the Jamais Arriere of the Douglas, and let my war-cry be set up, and I promise that ye shall well revenge my death."

By this time the English, who had been driven for several bowshots beyond that part of the field where the Earl of Douglas had fallen, were now rallying under the heroic efforts of the Hotspur, who, aided by his brother, was again cheering them on to the charge. The Scottish troops began again to give ground before their superior force, and were already retreating in numbers past the group who were occupied about the dying hero. They saw the immediate necessity of conveying him away while the ground was yet clear of the enemy, and Lundie, Lindsay, and the two Saintclaires, hastened to obey his injunctions. He uttered not a word of complaint to tell of the agonizing tortures he felt whilst they were removing him.

They laid him on a mossy bank among the long ferns, in the closest part of the thicket. There he took their hands in succession, squeezing them with affection, and when he had thus taken leave of Lindsay and the two Saintclaires,—

"Go," said he faintly to them, "ye have done all for the Douglas that humanity or friendship might require of ye; go, for Scotland lacketh the aid of your arms. Leave me with Lundie; 'tis meeter for his hand to close the eyes of his dying lord."

The brave knights looked their last upon him, covered their eyes, and stole silently away from a scene that entirely unmanned them. Lundie took out a silver crucifix, and bending over the Douglas, held it up under a stream of moonlight, that broke downwards through an opening in the thick foliage above them.

"I see it, Lundie," said Douglas; "I see the image of my blessed Redeemer. My sins have been many, but thou art already possessed of them all. My soul doth fix herself on him, in sincere repentance, and in the strong hope of mercy through his merits."

The affectionate Lundie knelt by the Earl's side, and whilst his own wounds bled copiously, his tears were dropping fast on his dying master.

"I know thine inmost heart, Lord Douglas," said he, in a voice oppressed by his grief; "thy hopes of Heaven may indeed be strong. Hast thou aught of worldly import to command me?"

"Margaret," said Douglas, in a voice scarcely audible, "my dearest Margaret! Tell Moray to forget not our last private converse; and do thou—do thou tell my wife, that my last thought, my last word, was—Margaret!"

His countenance began to change as Lundie gazed intently on it under the moonbeam. The weeping chaplain hastily pronounced the absolution, administered the consecrated wafer from a casket in his pocket, and performed the last religious duties bestowed upon the dying, and the heroic spirit of the Douglas took its flight to Heaven.

The grief of Lindsay and the Saintclaires subdued them only whilst they beheld the noble Douglas dying. No sooner had they left the thicket where he lay, than, burning with impatience to revenge his death, they hurried to the field. The younger Sir Patrick Hepborne had already reared his fallen standard, and shouts of "Douglas, Douglas! Jamais arriere!—A Douglas, a Douglas!" cleft the very skies. At this moment the English were gaining ground upon the Scottish centre, but this animating cry

not only checked their retreat, but brought aid to them from all quarters. Believing that the Douglas was still fighting in person, down came the Earl of Moray, with Montgomery, Keith, the Lord Saltoun, Sir Thomas Erskine, Sir John Sandilands, and many others, and the shouts of "Douglas, Douglas!" being repeated with tenfold enthusiasm, the charge against the English was so resistless, that they yielded before Scotland in every direction. Bravely was the banner of Douglas borne by the gallant Hepborne, who took care that it should be always seen among the thickest of the foes, well aware that the respect that was paid to it would always ensure it the close attendance of a glorious band of knights as its defenders. As he was pressing furiously on, he suddenly encountered an English knight, on whom his vigorous arm, heated by indiscriminate slaughter, was about to descend. The knight had lost his casque in the battle; the moon shed its radiance over a head of snow-white hair, and an accidental demivolt of his horse bringing his countenance suddenly into view, he beheld Sir Walter de Selby.

"I thank God and the Virgin, that thou art saved, old man," cried Hepborne, dropping his battle-axe; "oh, why art thou here? Had I been the innocent cause of thy death——"

He would have said more, and he would moreover have staid to see him in safety. But the press came thick at the moment, and they were torn asunder; so that Hepborne, losing all sight of him in the melée, was compelled to look to himself.

And now "A Douglas, a Douglas!" continued to ring through the field, and the English, thrown into complete confusion, were driven through the baggage-camp at the place they had first entered, flying before the Scottish forces. Hotspur alone stood to defend his brother, who was lying on the ground grievously wounded. Harry Piersie had abandoned his horse, and was standing over Sir Rafe, fighting bravely against a crowd of Scottish men-at-arms, when Sir Hugh Montgomery, Sir John Maxwell, and Sir William de Keith came up.

"Yield thee," said Sir Hugh Montgomery, "yield thee, noble Hotspur. God wot, it were bitter grief to see so brave a heart made cold."

"And who art thou who would have the Hotspur yield?" cried Piersie.

"I trust, Sir Harry Piersie, that to yield thee to Sir Hugh Montgomery will do thee as little dishonour as may be," replied the Scottish knight; "yield thee, then, rescue or no rescue."

"I do so yield to thee and fate, Sir Hugh Montgomery," said Hotspur; "but let my brother Rafe here have quick attendance, his wounds do well out sorely, and his steel boots run over with his blood."

"Let him be prisoner to these gentlemen," said Sir Hugh, turning to Keith and Maxwell, "and let us straightway convoy him to the Scottish camp."

The flying English were now driven far and wide, and day began to break ere the pursuit slackened. Among those who followed the chase most vehemently, was Sir David Lindsay. Infuriated by the loss of the hero to whom he was so devoted, he seemed to be insatiable in his vengeance. Whilst he was galloping after the flying foe at sunrise, the rays, as they shot over the eastern hill, were sent back with dazzling splendour from the gold-embossed armour of a knight, who had stopped at some distance before him to slake his thirst at a fountain. He was in the act of springing into the saddle as Lindsay approached; but the Scottish warrior believing, from the richness of his armour, that he was some one of noble blood, pushed after him so hard, and gained so much upon him, that he was nearly within reach of him with his lance-point.

"Turn, Sir Knight," cried Lindsay. "It is a shame thus to flee. I am Sir David Lindsay. By St Andrew, an thou turn not, I must strike thee through with my lance."

But the English knight halted not; on the contrary, he only pricked on the more furiously, and Lindsay's keenness being but the more excited, he followed him at full gallop, for more than a league, until at last the English knight's horse, which had shot considerably a-head of his, suddenly foundered under him. The rider instantly sprang to his legs, and drew out his sword to defend himself.

"I scorn to take unfair vantage of thee, Sir Knight," said Lindsay, dismounting from his horse, when he came up to him, and throwing down his lance, and seizing a small battle-axe that hung at his saddle-bow, he ran at the English knight, and a well-contested single combat ensued between them. But the weight of Lindsay's weapon was too much for the sword of the Englishman; and after their strokes had rung on each other's arms for a time, and that the Scot had bestowed some blows so heavy, that the plates of the mail began to give way under them,—

"I yield me, Sir David Lindsay," cried the English knight, breathless and ready to

sink with fatigue; "I yield me, rescue or no rescue."

"Ha," replied Lindsay, "'tis well. And whom, I pray thee, mayest thou be who hast cost me so long a chase, and contest so tough, ere I could master thee?"

"I am Sir Matthew Redman, governor of Berwick," replied the English knight.

"Gramercy, Sir Governor," said Sir David Lindsay; "sit thee down, then, with me on this bank, and let us talk a while. We seem to be both of us somewhat toil-spent with this encounter, yea, and thy grey destrier and my roan do seem to have had enow on't as well as their masters. Behold how they feed most peaceably together."

"Let us then imitate their example, good Sir Knight of Scotland," said Sir Matthew Redman. "I have a small wallet here, with some neat's tongue, and some delicate white bread; and this leathern bottle, though it be small, hath a cordial in it that would put life into a dead man."

The two foes, who had so lately endeavoured to work each other's death, sat down quietly together, and silently partook of the refreshment, and then alternately applying the little

leathern flask to their lips, they talked in friendly guise of the result of the battle.

"And now, Sir David of Lindsay," said Redman, "I am thy prisoner, and bound to obey thy will. But I have ever heard thee named as a courteous knight, the which doth embolden me to make thee a proposal. I have a certain lady at Newcastle, whom I do much love, and would fain see. If thy generosity may extend so far, I shall be much beholden to thee if thou wilt suffer me to go thither, to assure her of my safety, and to bid her adieu; on which I do swear to thee, on the word of a knight, that I will render myself to thee in Scotland within fifteen days hence."

"Nay, now I do see, Sir Matthew," said Lindsay archly—"now I do see right well why thou didst ride so hard from the field; but I am content to grant thee thy request; nay, if thou dost promise me, on the faith of a knight, to present thyself to me at Edinburgh, within three weeks from the present time, it is enow."

"I do so promise," replied Redman. And so shaking hands together, each took his horse, and mounted to pursue his own way.

By this time a thick morning mist had settled down on the face of the country, and Lindsay had hardly well parted from his prisoner

ere he perceived that he had lost his way. As he was considering how he should recover it, he beheld a considerable body of horsemen approaching, and believing them to be some of the Scottish army who had pushed on thus far in the pursuit, he rode up to them with very great joy; but what was his surprise when he found himself in the midst of some three or four hundred English lances!

"Who art thou, Sir Knight?" cried the leader, who, though clad in armour, yet wore certain episcopal badges about him that mightily puzzled the Scottish knight.

"I am Sir David Lindsay," replied he; "but whom mayest thou be, I pray thee?"

"I am the Bishop of Durham," replied the other; "thus far am I come to give mine aid to the Piersie."

"Thine aid cometh rather of the latest, Sir Bishop," replied Lindsay; "for, certes, his army is routed with great slaughter, and he and his brother Sir Rafe are prisoners in the Scottish camp."

"I have heard as much already from some of those who fled," replied the Bishop: "*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo?* what good would my being killed do my cousins the Piersie? Now I

do haste me back again to Newcastle; but thou must bear me company, Sir David."

"Sith thou dost say so, my sacred lord," replied Sir David, "I must of needscost obey thee, for, backed as thou art, I dare not say thee nay. Such is the strange fortune of war."

Sir David now rode towards Newcastle with the Bishop, and soon overtook the large army which he commanded, that was now returning thither. After being fairly lodged within the walls of the town, the Bishop treated him with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and left him to wander about at his own discretion, rather like a guest than a prisoner. The place was filled with mourning and lamentation, and every now and then fresh stragglers, who had fled from the field of Otterbourne, were dropping in, to tell new tales of the grievous loss and mortifying disgrace which had befallen the English arms. Murmurs began to arise against the Bishop, because he had not proceeded against the Scots, and attempted the rescue of the Piersies. At all events he might have revenged their loss. The Bishop himself, too, began to be somewhat ashamed that he should have retired so easily, and without so much as looking on the Scottish army. At last he consented to summon a council of war, and in it he was per-

suaded, by the importunity of the knights and esquires who were present, to order immediate proclamation for the assembling of his army, consisting of ten thousand men, to march long before sunrise.

"Verily our foes shall be consumed," said the Bishop, his courage rising. "*Si consistant adversum me castra non timebit cor meum.* Let the whole Scottish force be there, yet will my heart be bold for the encounter."

After the council of war, the Bishop introduced Sir David Lindsay to the guests who filled his house. The Scottish knight, so closely connected with the Douglas, was courteously received by the English chevaliers, who, though much cast down in reality by the failure of the Piersies' attempt, did their best to assume an air of gaiety before him. They vied with one another who should show him greatest kindness. Many were the questions put to him about the fate of the Douglas, but he was too cautious to say anything that could lead them to believe that he had fallen.

The ladies crowded around him, to satisfy their curiosity about the particulars of the battle, and he answered them with becoming gallantry. Among those who so addressed him, was a lady who hung pensively on the arm of

the Bishop, and whose figure bespoke her young and handsome. After some general conversation with him, during which she endeavoured to ascertain from him all that he knew as to what English knights had been killed or taken,—

"Sir Knight," said she, with a half-suppressed sigh, "I have heard of a certain brave chevalier of Scotland who did distinguish himself in France, Sir Patrick Hepborne, the younger of that name. Was he in the bloody field? and hath he escaped unhurt, I pray thee?"

"I do well know him, lady," replied Sir David Lindsay: "To him, and to his gallant father, was chiefly due the gaining of the glorious victory the Scots did yesternight achieve over the bravest army that did ever take the field. I saw him safe ere I left the fight. Proud might he be, I ween, to be so inquired after by one so lovely as thou art."

"Nay," said the lady, in some confusion, "I do but inquire to satisfy the curiosity of a friend." And so saying, she retreated towards the protection of the Bishop of Durham, who seemed to take an especial charge of her.

Sir David Lindsay, for his part, to avoid being annoyed by farther questions, retired within the deep recess of a Gothic window, where he

sat brooding over the untimely fate of the Douglas, and weeping inwardly at the blow that Scotland had sustained by his loss. He was awakened from his reverie by a friendly tap on the shoulder.

"Ha, Sir Matthew Redman!" said Lindsay, looking up with surprise.

"Sir David de Lindsay!" cried Redman, with signs of still greater astonishment; "what, in the name of the holy St Cuthbert, dost thou make here at Newcastle? Hath my cordial bottle bewildered thy brain so, that thou hast fancied that it was I who took thee, not thou who took me? Did I not promise thee, on the word of a knight, to go to thee at Edinburgh? and thinkest thou that I would not have kept my word?"

"Yea, Sir Matthew," replied Lindsay, "I have full faith in thine honour; but I believe there may now be little need that thou shouldst journey so far, or make to me any fynaunce; for no sooner hadst thou parted from me than I did fall into the hands of his Grace the Lord Bishop of Durham, who hath brought me hither as his prisoner; and if ye be so content, I do rather think we shall make an exchange, one for the other, if it may so please the Bishop."

"God wot how gladly I shall do so," replied Redman, shaking him cordially by the hand;

"but, by my troth, thou shalt not go hence until thou hast partaken of my hospitality; so thou shalt dine with me to-day, yea, and to-morrow alswa; and then we shall talk anon with the Bishop, after which thou shalt have good safe-conduct for Scotland; nay, I shall myself be thy guard over the Marches, yea, and moreover, give thee hearty cheer in mine own good town of Berwick, as thou dost pass thither."

CHAPTER V.

The two brothers, the Earls of Dunbar and Moray, were now left to command the Scottish army, after the afflicting death of the Earl of Douglas. Deeply as they grieved for him, they had but little leisure for mourning, since every succeeding moment brought them in harassing rumours, that the Bishop of Durham was coming against them with a great army. During the whole of the day succeeding the battle, and of the night which followed it, they were so kept on the alert, that they could even do but little to succour the wounded, or bury the dead. The prisoners, however, among whom were many renowned knights besides the two Piersies, were treated with all that chivalric courtesy and hospitality for which the age was so remarkable. Sir Rafe was immediately dispatched in a litter to Alnwick, that he might have the benefit of such careful treatment as might be most likely

to cure the many and severe wounds he had received.

After various false alarms, the second morning after the battle brought back the scouts, who had been sent to follow the flying enemy, and to gather what intelligence they might in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. By these men they were informed of the proclamation which had been made in the town, and of the proposed march of the Bishop of Durham's large army. A council of war was immediately held, and the opinion was unanimous, that they should remain where they were, to receive the Bishop in their present position, which they had already proved to be so favourable for successful defence against superior numbers; rather than march, harassed as they were with a number of wounded and prisoners, and with the risk of being overtaken in unfavourable ground. They accordingly hastened to strengthen themselves in the best way they could; and, as they had but little time for a choice of plans, they piled up an abattis, formed of the dead bodies of the slain, on the top of the broken rampart that stretched across between the flanking marshes, and defended the entrance to their position.

Before the enemy appeared, a very serious question arose for the consideration of the lead-

ers: Their prisoners amounted to above a thousand, and what was to be done with them? To have put them to death would have been so barbarous, that such an idea could not be entertained for a moment in such times; yet as their number was nearly equal to half their little army, the danger they ran from their breaking loose upon them during the fight, and even turning the tide of battle against them, was sufficiently apparent to every one. At length, after much debate and deliberation, it was generously resolved to trust them. They were accordingly drawn up in the centre of the camp, and an oath administered to them, that they should not stir from the spot during the ensuing battle; and that, be the result what it might, they should still consider themselves as prisoners to Scotland. After this solemnity, they left them slenderly guarded by some of the varlets and wainmen, with perfect confidence that they would keep their oath.

Then it was that the Earl of Dunbar thus encouraged his soldiers, after having drawn them up behind their lines.

"My brave Scots," said he, "ye who have hardly yet well breathed sith that ye did conquer the renowned Piersies of Northumberland, can have little fear, I trow, to encounter a mi-

tred priest. Verily, though his host be great, it will be but two strokes when both shepherd and sheep will be dispersed, and we shall teach this pastoral knight, that it were better for him to be a scourger of schoolboy urchins with birchen rods, than to essay thus, with the sword, to do battle against bearded soldiers."

This speech was received with shouts by the little army to which it was addressed, and, "Douglas, Douglas! revenge our brave, our beloved Douglas!" was heard to break from every part of the line. The two Earls had hardly completed their preparations, when the approach of the Bishop of Durham's army was announced. Orders were immediately issued for each soldier to blow the horn he carried, and the loud and discordant sound of these rude and variously-toned instruments being re-echoed and multiplied from the hills, was distinctly audible at several miles distance. It rung in the ears of the Bishop, and very much appalled him. Had it not been for a spice of shame he felt, he would have been disposed to have gone no farther; but the knights and esquires who were with him were still sanguine in their hopes of successfully attacking, with so large a force, the small army of the Scots, wasted as it was by the recent bloody engagement.

"Verily it is a sinful thing to trust in the arm of flesh," said the Bishop, growing paler and paler. "Who knoweth what may be the issue of the battle? Trust not in numbers. *Non salvatur rex per multam virtutem;* even the bravery of a Bishop shall not always win the fight. *Gigas non salvabitur in multitudine virtutis suæ;* even the courage of the greatest of churchmen shall not always prevail. *Fallax equus ad salutem;* a horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man. St Cuthbert grant," ejaculated he in a lower tone—"St Cuthbert grant that our steeds may be preserved."

The Bishop, however, dissembling his feelings as well as he could, continued to advance in good order until he came within sight of the Scots; when, beholding the strength of their position, and the horrible bulwark of defence they had constructed with the heaps of the dead bodies of the English whom they had already sacrificed, and listening to their wild shrieks of defiance, mingled with the increased sound of their horns, his blood froze within him, and he halted to reason with those who had been so prone to attack the foe. But opinions had been mightily changed in the course of a mile's march. The knights and esquires, who had been lately so bold, now listened with

becoming patience to the prudent arguments of their reverend leader; and when, after a considerable halt, and holding a communication with the Castle of Otterbourne, the Bishop did at last give the word for his army to retreat, there was not a single voice lifted in condemnation of the movement.

When it was fully ascertained in the Scottish army that the retrograde march of the English was no manœuvre, but a genuine retreat, a strong guard of observation was planted, and orders were given to proceed with the sad duty, already too long neglected, of collecting such of the wounded as had lain miserably on the plain, without food or attention, ever since they had fallen. Parties were also appointed to bury the dead.

The body of the heroic Douglas had never been deserted by the affectionate Lundie, who, though himself grievously wounded, sat watching by it in the thicket where he died, until the termination of the battle and the break of day enabled the Saintclaires, the Earl of Moray, and the Hepbornes, to come to his aid. Then was his honoured corpse carried to the camp; but it was not till after the departure of the Bishop of Durham, that the Earls of Moray and Dunbar, accompanied by the whole chivalry of the

Scottish army, met together at night in the pavilion of the Douglas. There—sad contrast to the happy night which they had so lately spent in the same place, under the cheering influence of his large, mild, and benignant eye!—they came to behold his body laid out in state. It was attended, even in death, by those who had never abandoned him in life. By the side of his bier lay his brave son Archibald, who had so well fulfilled his last injunctions. At his feet were stretched his two faithful esquires, who had so nobly perished with their master. Near them stood Robert Hop Pringle, leaning on the Douglas's shield, who, having been separated from him in the thickest press, had fought like a lion, vainly searching for him through the field, and who now looked with an eye of mingled grief and envy on his comrades. Richard Lundie too was there, wounded as he was, to perform a solemn service for that soul with which he had long held the closest and dearest converse. The place was dimly illuminated by the red glare of numerous torches, held by some hardy soldiers, who, though formed of the coarsest human clay, were yet unable to look towards the bier where lay the body of their brave commander, whose fearless heart had so often led them on to glory, without the big tears run-

ning down the furrows of their weather-beaten cheeks. Those who were tempered of finer mould, and whose rank had brought them into closer contact with the Douglas, and, above all, those whom strict friendship had bound to him, though they struggled hard to bear up like men, were forced to yield to the feelings that oppressed them. So overpowering indeed was the scene, that Harry Piersie himself, who had craved permission to be present, wept tears of unfeigned sorrow over the remains of him who had been so lately his noble rival in the field of fame. "Douglas," said he, with a quivering lip, that marked the intensity of his feelings, "what would I not give to see that lofty brow of thine again illumined with the radiant sunshine of thy godlike soul?—Accursed be my folly—accursed be my foolish pride! Would that the curtailment of half the future life of Hotspur could be given to restore and eke out thine!—God wot how joyously he would now make the willing sacrifice. Thou hast not left thy peer in chivalry, and even Hotspur's glory must wane for lack of thee to contend with."

This generous speech of the noble Piersie deeply affected all present. Sir Patrick Hepborne stole silently out of the tent to give way to his emotions in private, and to breathe the

invigorating breeze of evening, that sported among the dewy furze and the wild thyme that grew on the side of the hill. The moon was by this time up. Hepborne looked over the lower ground, that was now widely lighted up by her beams, where the furious and deadly strife had so lately raged, and where all was now comparatively still. The only signs of human life—and they spoke volumes for its folly, its frailty, and its insignificance—were the few torches that were here and there seen straggling about, carried by those who were creeping silently to and fro over the field of the dead, looking for the bodies of their friends.

Hepborne's heart was already sufficiently attuned to sadness; and it led him to descend the slope before him, that he might be a spectator of the melancholy scene. As he wandered about from one busy group to another, he met his esquire Mortimer Sang, who, though so actively engaged at the beginning of the battle, had fortunately escaped, covered indeed with wounds of little importance in themselves. His friend Roger Riddel, who had been a good deal hurt, but who had been also fortunate enough to survive an attack where it appeared almost impossible that a mouse could have escaped with life, was with him. They were employed in the

pious duty of looking for some of their friends who had not appeared. After they had turned over many an unknown and nameless corpse, and many a body whose face had been familiar to them, on each of whom Roger Riddel had some short and pithy moral remark to bestow, they at last discovered the well-set form of Ralpho Proudfoot.

"Good fellow, thy pride is laid low, I well wot," cried Roger Riddel, as he held up the head of the dead man to the light of the torch, and discovered who he was.

The same haughty expression that always characterised him still sat upon his forehead in death; his eyebrows were fiercely knit, and his lip curled. His battle-axe was firmly grasped with both his hands, and a heap of English dead lay around him. He had fallen across the body of a Scottish man-at-arms, and on turning him up, Hepborne was shocked to behold the features of Robert Lindsay.

"Ah me!" cried Roger Riddel; "what will become of thine ould father, Robin?"

"Robert Lindsay!" said Sang—"Blessed Virgin!—no—it cannot be—ay—there is indeed that open countenance of truth, the which was never moved with human wrath or wickedness. This is indeed a bitter blow to us all; and as

for his poor father, as thou sayest, Roger, Heaven indeed knows how the old man may stand it, for poor Robert here was the only hope and comfort of his life. Let me but clip a lock of his hair, and take from his person such little trinkets as may peraunter prove soothing, though sad memorials, to the afflicted Gabriel."

"Alas, poor Robert Lindsay !—alas for poor Gabriel !" was all that Hepborne's full heart could utter, as recollections of home, and of his boyish days, crowded upon him until his eyes ran over.

The position in which their bodies were found sufficiently explained that Lindsay and Proudfoot had been fighting side by side in the midst of a cloud of foes. Lindsay had fallen first, and Proudfoot had stood over him, defending his dying friend, until, overpowered by numbers, he had been stretched across him, covered with mortal wounds. Near him lay the body of an English knight, and some of those who knew him declared him to be Sir Miers de Willoughby.

Hepborne saw that a grave was dug to contain the bodies of Lindsay and Proudfoot, and he himself assisted the esquires in depositing them in the earth, locked in each other's embrace.

CHAPTER VI.

After Sir Patrick Hepborne had assisted to perform the last sad duties to the remains of Robert Lindsay and Ralpho Proudfoot, his attention was caught by the appearance of a solitary cluster of lights on the distant part of the field, where the slaughter of the English had been greatest. Curiosity led him to approach, when he perceived that they were borne by a party who followed a bier, that was slowly carried in the direction of Otterbourne Castle. Advancing to a point which they must necessarily pass, he saw, as the procession drew nearer, that the bier was supported by some English spearmen, and that it was followed by a group of women.

Hepborne's attention was particularly attracted by a lady in the midst of them, who walked with her head veiled in the folds of her mantle, and seemed to be deeply affected by that grief in which the others only sympathised. She took her mantle from her head, and threw her

eyes upwards, as if in inward ejaculation. Sir Patrick started, for he beheld that very countenance, the charms of which, though seen but by glimpses at Norham, had made too deep an impression upon his heart ever to be forgotten; but now they seemed to be more than ever familiar to him, as he was disposed to believe, from their frequent presence to the eye of his imagination. He gazed in silent rapture. The strong resemblance between his page Maurice de Grey and the lady now struck him the more powerfully, that he had a full opportunity of perusing every trait: he was confounded: the mantle dropped over the alabaster forehead, and the countenance was again shrouded from his eyes. The procession moved on, and he followed, almost doubting whether it was not composed of phantoms, until it approached the gate of the Castle of Otterbourne, where the captain of the place, attended by his garrison, appeared to receive it. Still Hepborne had difficulty in convincing himself that the whole was not a waking vision,—a belief warranted by the superstition of his country. It slowly entered the gateway. The lady in whom he felt so deep an interest was about to disappear. He could bear suspense no longer.

"Lady Eleanore de Selby—Lady de Vere," cried he, in a frantic voice.

The lady started at the sound of it, threw back the mantle from her head, and cast her eyes around in strong agitation, until they glanced on Hepborne's face, when she uttered a faint scream, and fell back senseless into the arms of her attendants, who crowded around her, and hastily bore her within the gateway of the Castle, the defences of which being immediately closed, she was shut from his straining sight.

Hepborne stood for some time in a state of stupefaction ere he could muster sufficient self-command to return to his tent. The abrupt termination of the scene, which still remained fresh on his mind, almost convinced him of the accuracy of his conjecture as to its having been some strange supernatural appearance he had beheld. He slowly found his way to his friends, his soul vexed by a thousand contending conjectures and perplexities, which he found it impossible to satisfy or reconcile.

Meanwhile Mortimer Sang, who had been earnestly searching for the body of Rory Spears, of whose death he had begun to entertain great apprehension, was surprised by the appearance of a damsel, whom he saw bearing a torch and bitterly weeping.

"Holy St Andrew!" exclaimed he; "Katherine Spears, can it be thee in very body—or

is it thy wraith I behold? Speak, if thou be'st flesh and blood—for the love of the Holy Virgin, speak."

"Oh, dear Master Sang," cried Katherine, running to him, and proving, by the gripe that she took of his arm, that she was indeed something corporeal, "the blessed St Mary be praised that I have met with thee; thank Heaven, thou art safe at least. But oh, tell me, tell me, hast thou seen aught of my dear father? Hath he 'scaped this dreadful field of death?"

"Thy father, I yet trust, is well," replied Sang, much perplexed; "but how, in the name of all that is wonderful, didst thou come here?"

"I came with an English lady, who is now at the Castle of Otterbourne," replied Katherine, evasively. "But oh, tell me, tell me, I entreat thee," said the poor girl, earnestly seizing his hand, "tell me, hast thou seen my father sith the fight was over?"

"He hath not appeared since the battle," said Sang in a half-choked voice, and with considerable hesitation; "but we trust he may be prisoner with the English, for as yet we have searched for him in vain among the slain scattered over the field. Yes," continued he, in a firmer and more assured tone, as he observed the alarm that was taking possession of her;

"yes, he hath not been found—and as he hath not been found, dear Katherine, it is clear that he must be a prisoner—so—and—and so thou wilt soon see him again; for as there must be a truce, the few prisoners tane by the English must speedily be sent home again."

"Nay, but do they seek him still, Sir Squire?" cried Katherine, but little satisfied with this attempt of Sang's to soothe her apprehension. "Alas, I must seek for him."

"Nay, this is no scene for thee, dear Katherine," replied Sang; "return, I pray thee, to the Castle, and I will search, and thou shalt quickly know all."

"Try not to hinder me, Sir Squire," replied Katherine; "I will go seek for my father. I have already seen enow of those grim and ghastly faces to fear in such a cause."

"Then shall I go with thee, Katherine," cried Sang, seeing her determination. "Here lean upon mine arm."

When they came into the thickest part of the field of slaughter, Katherine shuddered and shrank as they moved aside, from time to time, to shun the heaps of slain. Sang looked everywhere for his comrade Roger Riddel, and at last happily met him; but, alas, Riddel could give no intelligence of him they sought for. By

this time they had approached the abattis of dead bodies which had been so hastily piled up for defence against the expected attack of the Bishop of Durham.

"Come not this way, Katherine," cried Sang; "this rampart of the dead is horrible."

Katherine's heart was faint within her at the sight;—she stopped and turned away, when, just at that moment, her ear caught the whining of a dog at a little distance.

"That voice was Oscar's," cried she eagerly. "Oh, let us hasten, my father may be there."

They followed her steps with the lights, and there she beheld her father lying on the ground, grievously wounded, and half-dead with want and loss of blood. Luckily for him, poor Oscar had been accidentally let out at the time that Sang and Riddel went forth to search among the slain, and having sought more industriously for his master than all the rest, he had discovered the unhappy Rory Spears built into the wall of the dead. Rory had fallen before the tremendous charge made by the English, when they burst through the line of entrenchment, where he had fought like a lion himself, and inspired a something more than human courage into those around him. Having lost his basinet, he had received a severe cut

on the head, besides many other wounds, which affected him not. But the thrust of a lance through his thigh was that which brought him to the ground; after which, he was nearly trampled to death by the rush of English foot and horsemen that poured over him. During the time that had passed since he was laid low, he had fainted repeatedly, and had been for hours insensible to his sufferings. Whilst lying in one of his mimic fits of death, he had been taken up by some of those who were employed in heaping the slain into a rampart, and who, having little leisure for minute examination, had made use of him as part of its materials. Fortunately his head was placed outwards, so that, when he recovered, he was enabled to breathe, and consequently was saved from suffocation. Oscar had no sooner found him, than, seizing the neck of his haqueton with his teeth, he pulled him gently out upon the plain.

"My father, my dear father!" cried Katherine Spears, running to support him, and much affected by the sight of his wan visage, the paleness of which, together with his sunken eye, showed more ghastly from the blood that had run down in such profusion from his wound, that the very colour of his beard was changed, and the hairs of it matted together by it.

"What dost thou here, Kate?" demanded Rory, in a firmer voice than his appearance would have authorised the bystanders to have expected from him; "sure this be no place for a silly maiden like thee."

"Oh, father, father," cried Katherine, embracing him, and doing her best to assist Sang in raising him up by the shoulders; "the holy Virgin be praised that thou art yet alive."

"Alive!" answered Rory; "troth, I'm weel aware that I'm leevin, for albeit that the agony o' my head wad gi'e me peace enow to let me believe that I had really depairted in real yearnest, the very hunger that ruggeth so cruelly at my inside wad be enew to keep me in mind that I was still belonging to this warld. For the sake o' the gude Saint Lawrence, Maister Sang, gar ane o' them chields rin and see gif Mrs Margaret MacCleareye can gi'e me a bit o' cauld mutton or sike like, and a wee soup yill. Tell the woman I'll pay her for the score o' yestreen and a' thegither. But, aboon a' thing, see that they mak haste, or I'll die or they come back. What sould I ha'e done an it had na been for the gude wife's wee bit supper afore we fell to!"

Sang immediately dispatched one of the camp-followers who was standing by, and who quickly returned with the melancholy intelligence that

Mrs MacCleareye's frail hut had been levelled with the earth by the press—that her provender had been scattered and pillaged—that her ale-barrels had been rolled away and emptied, and that she herself had also disappeared.

"Hech me," cried Rory, altogether forgetful of his own craving stomach—"poor woman, I'm sorry for her loss; aboon a' it erketh me sair that I paid her not her dues yestreen. But, an a' live, she or her heirs shall ha'e it, as I'm a true esquire. But, och, I'm faint."

"Take some of this, Master Spears," cried Mortimer Sang, holding a leathern bottle to Rory's mouth, and pouring a few drops of a cordial into it.

"Och, Maister Sang, that is reveeving!" said Rory. "A wee drap mair, for the love o' St Lowry. Mercy me! Weel, it's an evil thing, after a', to be killed in battle, (as I may be allowed to judge, I rauken, wha has been half-killed,) was it no for the glory that is to be gotten by it. But to be cut down and then travelled ower like a mercat-causey—and then to be biggit up like a lump o' whinstane intil a dyke—ay, and that too for the intent o' haudin out the yenemy, and saving the craven carcages o' ither fouk, and a' to keep the dastard sauls in chields that ane is far frae liking as weel as ane's

sell—troth, there's onything but honour or pleasure in't, to my fancy."

"Uve, uve! sore foolish speech, Master Spears," said a voice from the heap of dead bodies; "great pleesures and high honours, in troth, sure, sure."

"Captain MacErchar!" cried Sang. "Run, Roger, and yield him relief."

Squire Riddel hastened to the assistance of MacErchar, and drew forth his great body from the place it had occupied in the bottom of the fortification, where the skilful architect had, with much judgment, made use of him as a substantial foundation. His history had been something similar to that of Rory Spears, and he had not suffered less from wounds. He was brought forward and placed on a bank beside Rory, and a portion of Squire Sang's life-inspiring bottle was given to him with the happiest effect.

"Hech me," cried Spears, looking round with great compassion on his companion in glory and misfortune—"hech me, Captain MacErchar, wha sould hae thought that thou wert sae near? Had we but kend we mought ha'e had a crack thegither, albeit hardly sae cosy as in Mrs MacCleareye's. Troth I was sair weary and lonesome wi' lying, and even the converse o' the sagaciousome brute there was a comfort to

me. This is but ane evil way o' weeting a squireship. We sould hae done it in ane ither gate, I rauken, had the English chields but defaured a wee. But I trust that neither have you disgraced your captaincy, nor I my squireship. I saw you fighting like a very incarnate deevil, ay, and sending the Southrons back frae the rampyre like roquet ba's frae a wa', though it may be premeesed that nane o' them ever stotted again."

"Ouch ay, troth ay," replied MacErchar, "it was a bonny tuilzie, Master Spears. She did her pairts both,—both—both. Ou ay; it was a great pleasures, in troth, to see her chap the chields on the crown."

"Poor Oscar, poor man," said Rory, patting his dog's head as he put his nose towards his face to claim his share of his master's attention; "troth I maun say that thou didst do me a good turn this blessed night. I was just thinking as I lay here, that as I must now bear the proper armorial devices of ane esquire, I sould take the effigy of ane allounde couchant beside his master sejant, with this motto, 'Fair fa' the snout that pu'ed me out.'"

"How couldst thou think of such things, my dear father, whilst thou didst lie in plight so pitiful?" cried Katherine Spears.

"Troth, I had naething else to think o', ye silly maiden, but that or hunger," said Rory; "and that last, I'll promise thee, was a sair sharp thought. And, by St Lowry, it doth sore sting me at this precious moment."

"Uve, uve! sore hungry—sore hungry," cried MacErchar.

"Nay, then, let us hasten to carry both of them to camp without farther let," cried Sang

"Come, bestir ye, varlets," said he to a crowd of camp-followers who were standing near; "lend us your aid."

"Nay," said Katherine, "my father must be carried to Otterbourne Castle."

"Otterbourne Castle!" cried Rory; "what mean ye, silly quean?"

Katherine bent over him, and put her mouth to his ear to whisper him.

"Ay,—aweel,—poor thing!—very right.—an it maun be sae, it just maun," said he, after hearing what she had to say. "Aweel, Maister Sang, ye maun just tell the Yearl, that as I can be o' nae mair service in fighting at this present time, I may as weel gae till the Castle o' Otterbourne as ony ither gate to be leeched, mair especially as it is my belief that kitchen physic will be the best physic for me. Tell him, that I'm gawin there wi' my doch-

ter Kate till a friend of his, and that he sall ken a' about it afterhend."

Rory was accordingly carried straight to Otterbourne Castle, whither the gallant Mortimer Sang accompanied Katherine. Their parting at the gate was tender,—but he could wring nothing from her that could elucidate the mystery of her present conduct.

CHAPTER VII.

Although the morning sun rose bright and cheerful upon Otterbourne, yet were its rays incapable of giving gladness to those in the Scottish camp. The little army of heroes had gained a great and glorious victory, but they had dearly paid for it in the single death of Douglas. There was, therefore, more of condolence than of exultation among them as they gave each other good-morrow. They broke up their encampment with silence and sorrow, and marched off towards Scotland, under the united command of the Earls of Moray and Dunbar, with the solemn pace and fixed eyes of men who followed some funereal pageant. Indeed, it was so in fact; for at the head of the main body of the army was the car that carried the coffin of the Douglas Before it was borne his banner, that "Jamais Arriere," which, in the hands of Sir Patrick

Hepborne the younger, had so happily turned the fate of the battle; and in compliment to the gallant young knight, it was his esquire, Mortimer Sang, to whom the honour of carrying it was assigned. Behind it came the fatal pennon of Piersie, which had been the cause of so much waste of human life, and around the machine were clustered all those brave knights, who had lately looked up to the hero for the direction of their every movement, at whose least nod or sign they would have spurred to achieve the most difficult and dangerous undertakings, and whose applause was ever considered by them as their highest reward. The life and soul of the army seemed now to have departed. They hung their heads, and marched on, rarely breaking the silence that prevailed, except to utter some sad remark calculated to heighten the very sorrow that gave rise to it.

The last of their columns disappeared from the ground, and when Katherine Spears and the lady on whom she attended cast their eyes over it from the window of the tower in the Castle of Otterbourne, it was again as much a scene of peace, as if no such fierce warfare had ever disturbed it. Huge heaps, and long lines, indeed, marked the places under which hun-

dreds of those who had merrily marched thither, now reposed, Scot and Englishman, in amity together. The ruined huts and broken-down entrenchments too were still visible; but the daisies and the other little flowers that enamelled the field, refreshed by the morning dew, had again raised their crushed heads, and the timid flocks and herds, which had been scared by the din of arms, had again ventured forth from the covert whither they had been driven, and were innocently pasturing on the very spot where heroes had been so lately contending in the mortal strife. The lady, however, suffered her attention to be occupied with these objects for a brief space only, ere she returned to perform her melancholy task of watching by those beloved remains she had so piously rescued from the promiscuous heaps of slaughter that covered the battle-field. She again sought the chapel of the Castle, where lay the brave old Knight Sir Walter de Selby, for it was he, who, having met with some less merciful foe than Sir Patrick Hepborne, had been cut down in the melée. The mortal wound now gaped wide on his venerable head, and the beauty of his silver hair was disfigured with clotted gore. The tears of her who now seated herself by his bier fell fast and silently, as she bent over that benig-

nant countenance now no longer animated by its generous spirit. Now it was she recalled all that affection so largely exhibited towards her from her very childhood. His faults had at this moment disappeared from her memory, and as the more remarkable instances of his kindness arose in succession, she gave way to that feeling natural to sensitive minds on such occasions, and bitterly accused herself of having but ill requited them.

The body of Sir Walter remained in the Castle of Otterbourne for several days, until proper preparations were made there and at Norham, for doing it the honours due to the remains of so gallant a knight, and one who had enjoyed so important a command. After the escort was ready, the lady parted with much sorrow from Katherine Spears, whose father was yet unable to bear the motion of a journey. She commended both to the especial protection of the Captain of the Castle, and then hastily seating herself in her horse-litter to hide her grief from observation, the funeral procession moved away.

It was long after the sunset of the second day, that the troops of the garrison of Norham, under the Lieutenant Oglethorpe, marched out in sad array to meet the corpse of their late

governor. Clad in all the insignia of woe, and each soldier bearing a torch in his hand, they halted on the high ground over the village, and rested in mute and sorrowful expectation of the approach of the funereal train. Lights appeared slowly advancing from a distance, and the dull chanting of voices, and the heavy measured tread of men, were heard. The coffin had already been removed from the car in which it had hitherto been carried, and four priests who had gone to meet it, one of them bearing a crucifix aloft, now appeared walking bareheaded before it, and chanting a hymn. The coffin itself was sustained on the shoulders of a band of men-at-arms, who accompanied it from Otterbourne; and after it came the horse-litter of the lady, attended by a train of horsemen who rode with their lances reversed. Among these, alas! no man belonging to the deceased was to be seen, for all had perished with him in the field.

When the procession had reached the spot where the troops from Norham were drawn up to receive it, those who formed it halted, and the bearers, resigning their burden to the chief officers of the garrison, fell back to join their fellows. One half of the soldiers of the Castle then moved on before the body, whilst the other

half filed in behind the lady's litter, and the men of Otterbourne were left to close up the rear of the pageant.

As they descended the hill, the inhabitants of the village turned out to gaze on the imposing spectacle; and after it had passed by, they followed to witness the last obsequies of one, whose military pomp had often delighted their eyes, and the hardy deeds of whose prime were even now in every man's mouth.

Having reached the entrance to the church, the soldiers formed a double line up to the great door, each man leaning upon his lance, in grief that required no acting. The lady descended from her litter. With her head veiled, and her person enveloped in black drapery, she leaned upon the arm of Lieutenant Oglethorpe, and followed the body with tottering steps and streaming eyes into the holy fane. The church was soon filled by the Norham soldiery, ranked up thickly around it, the blaze of the torches pierced into the darkest nook of its Gothic interior, and the solemn ceremony proceeded.

The lady had wound up her resolution to the utmost, that she might undergo the trying scene without flinching. She stood wonderfully composed, with her eyes cast upon the ground, endeavouring to fix her thoughts on the service

for the dead, which the priests were chanting; when chancing to look up, her attention was suddenly caught by the figure of a Franciscan monk, who, elevated on the steps of the altar, stood leaning earnestly forward from behind a Gothic pillar that half concealed him, his keen eyes fixed upon her, with a marked intensity of gaze. Her heart was frozen within her by his very look, and uttering a faint scream, she swooned away, and would have fallen on the pavement, but for the timely aid of Oglethorpe and those who were present. Dismay and confusion followed. The ceremonial was interrupted,—and the by-standers believing that her feelings had been too deeply affected by the so sad and solemn spectacle, hastened to remove her from the scene, so that she was quickly conveyed to her litter, and escorted to the Castle.

The funeral rites were hurried over, and the body was committed to the silent vault, with no other witnesses than the officiating priests, the populace, and such of the officers and soldiers as had been bound to the deceased by some strong individual feeling of affection, and who now pressed around the coffin, to have the melancholy satisfaction of assisting in its descent.

While the remains of Sir Walter de Selby were conveying from Otterbourne Castle, the Scottish Nobles and Knights who had accompanied the body of the Douglas, were engaged in assisting in the obsequies of that heroic Earl at Melrose. All that military or religious pomp could devise or execute was done to honour his remains, and many a mass for the peace of his soul was sung by the pious monks of its abbey. The brave Scottish Knights surrounded his tomb in silence and sorrow, all forgetting that they had gained a victory, and each feeling that he had lost a private friend in him whose body they had consigned to the grave.

It was only that morning that Sir Patrick Hepborne had heard accidentally from his esquire the particulars of his unexpected meeting with Katherine Spears; and this information, added to those circumstances which had so strangely occurred to himself, determined him to proceed to Norham the very next day, where he hoped to unravel the mystery that had been gradually thickening around him. The truce that had been already proclaimed ensured his safety, so that he entered the court-yard of the Norham Tower Hostel with perfect confidence. Although Hepborne and his esquire came after it was dark, the quick eye of Mrs Kyle immediately

recognised them; and conscious of the share she had had in the treachery so lately attempted against them, she took refuge in the innermost recesses of the kitchen part of the building. But Sang was determined not to spare her, and after searching everywhere, he at last detected her in her concealment, from which he led her forth in considerable confusion.

"So, beautiful Mrs Kyle," said he, "so thou wert minded to have done our two noble knights and their humbler esquires a handsome favour, truly, the last time they did honour thy house? By St Andrew, we should have made a pretty knot, dangling from the ramparts of Norham."

"Nay, talk not so, Sir Squire," replied the hostess in a whining tone; "it was the wicked Sir Miers de Willoughby who did bribe me to put ye all in his power. And then he did never talk of aught else but the ransom for thy liberty; and in truth, love did so blind me, that I thought not more of the matter. But I trow I am well enow punished for my folly; for here he came, and by his blazons and blandishments he did so overmatch me, that he hath ta'en from me, by way of borrow, (a borrow, I wis, that will never come laughing home again,) many a handful of the bonny broad pieces my poor hus-

band Sylvester, that is gone, did leave me. Yet nathless have I enow left to make any man rich; and when Ralpho Proudfoot doth return frae the wars——"

"Poor Ralpho Proudfoot will never return," said Sang, interrupting her, in a melancholy tone; "these hands did help to lay him in the earth."

"Poor Ralpho," cried Mrs Kyle, lifting her apron to a dry eye, "poor Proudfoot! He was indeed a proper pretty man. But verily," added she, with a deep sigh, whilst at the same time she threw a half-reproachful, half-loving glance at Sang, "verily, 'twere better, perhaps, for a poor weak woman to think no more of man, seeing all are deceivers alike. Wilt thou step this gate, Sir Squire, and taste my malvoisie? Or wilt thou——"

"What tramp of many feet is that I hear in the village?" demanded Sang, interrupting her.

"'Tis nought but the burying o' our auld Captain o' Norham," replied Mrs Kyle; "I trust that we sall have some right gay and jolly knight to fill his boots. Auld de Selby was grown useless, I wot. Gie me some young rattling blade, that will take pleasure in chatting to a bonny buxom quean when she comes in his way. I haena had a word frae the auld

man for this I kenna how long, but a rebuke now and then for the deboshing o' his men-at-arms, the which was more the fault o' my good ale than o' me. But where are ye running till, Master Sang?—Fye on him, he's away."

Sang did indeed hasten to tell his master of the passing funeral procession, and Hepborne ran out to follow it. It had already reached the church, and by the time he got to the door, the interior was so filled, that it was only by immense bodily exertion that he squeezed himself in at a small side-door. His eyes immediately caught the figure of the lady, and there they rested unconscious of all else. The moment she lifted her head, he recognised the features of Maurice de Grey, and of her whom he had seen on the battle-field of Otterbourne. But her fainting allowed him not a moment for thought. The crowd of men-at-arms between him and the object of his solicitude bid defiance to all his efforts to reach her, and ere he could regain the open air, her litter was already almost out of sight.

"Poor soul," said a compassionate billman, who had been looking anxiously after it, "thou hast indeed good cause to be afflicted. Verily, thou hast lost thy best friend."

"Of whom dost thou speak, old man?" demanded Hepborne, eagerly.

"Of the poor Lady Beatrice, who was carried to the Castle but now," replied the man.

"What saidst thou?" demanded Hepborne; "Lady Beatrice! Was not that the daughter of thy deceased governor? was not that the Lady Eleanore de Selby, now the Lady de Vere?"

"Nay, Sir Knight, that she be not," replied the man, "nouther the one nor the other, I wot; and if I might adventure to speak it, I would say that there be those who do think that the Lady Eleanore de Selby, now the Lady de Vere, hath no small spice of the Devil in her composition, whilst the Lady Beatrice is well known to all to be an angel upon earth."

"Who is she, and what is her history, my good fellow?" demanded Hepborne, slipping money into his hand.

"Meseems thou art a stranger, Sir Knight, that thou knowest not the Lady Beatrice," said the man; "but I can well satisfy thy curiosity, seeing I was with good Sir Walter in that very Border raid, during the which she did become his. Our men had driven the herds and flocks from a hill on the side of one of the streams of Lammermoor, when, as we passed by the cottage

of the shepherd who had fed them, his wife, with an infant in her arms, and two or three other children around her, came furiously out to attack Sir Walter with her tongue, as he rode at the head of his lances. 'My curse upon ye, ye English loons!' cried she bitterly; 'no content wi' the sweep o' our master's hill, ye hae ta'en the bit cow that did feed my poor bairns. Better take my wee anes too, for what can I do wi' them?' A soldier was about to quiet her evil tongue by a cruel stroke of his axe. 'Fye on thee,' said Sir Walter; 'what, wouldst thou murder the poor woman? Her rage is but natural. Verily, our prey is large enow without her wretched cow.' And then turning to her, with a good-natured smile on his face, 'My good dame, thou shalt have thy cow.' And the beast was restored to her accordingly. 'The Virgin's blessing be on thee, Sir Knight,' said the woman. 'And now,' said Sir Walter, 'by'r Lady, I warrant me thou wouldst have ill brooked my taking thee at thy word. Marry, I promise thee,' continued he, pointing to a beautiful girl of five years, apparently her eldest child, 'marry, I'll warrant me thou wouldst have grudged mightily to have parted with that bonny face?'—'Nay, I do indeed love Beatrice almost as well as she were

mine own child, albeit I did only nurse her,' replied the dame; 'but of a' the bairns, she, I wot, is the only one that I could part with.' 'Is she not thy child, then?' said Sir Walter; 'whose, I pr'ythee, may she be?'—'That is what I canna tell thee, Sir Knight,' replied the woman. 'It is now about four years and a half sith that a young lordling came riding down the glen. He was looking for a nurse, and the folk did airt him to me, who had then lost my first-born babe. He put this bairn, whom he called Beatrice, into my arms, and a purse into my lap, and away he flew again, saying that he would soon be back to see how the bairn throve. The baby was richly clad, so methought it must be some fair lady's stolen love-pledge. But I ha'e never seen him sithence, nor need I ever look for him now. And troth Robby and I hae enew o' hungry mouths to feed withouten hers, poor thing—ay, and maybe a chance o' mair.'—'Wilt thou part with the child to me, then?' said Sir Walter; 'I have but one daughter, who is of her age, and I would willingly take this beauteous Beatrice to be her companion.'—The poor woman had many scruples, but her husband, who now ventured to show himself, had none; and insisting on his wife's compliance, Beatrice was brought home with

us to Norham, adopted by the good Sir Walter, and has ever been treated by him sithence as a second daughter. What marvel, then, Sir Knight, that she should swoon at his burying?"

Light now broke in at once on Sir Patrick Hepborne. As we have seen in the opening chapter of our story, he was struck, even in the twilight, by the superior manner and attractions of the lady who had lost her hawk, and whose gentle demeanour had led him to conclude that she was the Lady Eleanore de Selby, of whose charms he had heard so much. Having been thus mistaken at first, he naturally went on, from all he heard and saw afterwards, and especially in the interviews he had at Norham, with her who now turned out to have been the companion of the Lady Eleanore de Selby, to mislead himself more and more. He returned to his inn to ruminate on this strange discovery: but be the beautiful Beatrice who she might, he had loved her, and her alone, and he felt that his passion now became stronger than ever. His mind ran hastily over past events; he at once suspected, that his inconsiderate jealousy had been, in fact, awakened by accidentally beholding an interview between the real Eleanore de Selby and her lover, and he cursed his haste that had so foolishly hurried him away from

Norham; he remembered the fair hand that had waved the white scarf as he was crossing the Tweed; he recalled the countenance, the behaviour, and the conversation of his page Maurice de Grey; he kissed the emerald ring which he wore on his finger; and his heart was drowned in a rushing tide of wild sensations, where hope and joy rose predominant. His generous soul swelled with transport at the thought of being the protector of her whom he now adored, and whom he now found, at the very moment she was left, as he believed, in a state of utter destitution. His impatience made him deplore, that decency forbade his visiting the Lady Beatrice that night, but he resolved to seek for an audience of her early the next morning,

At such hour, then, as a lady could be approached with propriety, he dispatched his esquire on an embassy to the Castle. He had little fear of the result, from what had already passed between them; but what was his mortification to learn, that the Lady Beatrice had been gone from Norham for above five or six hours, having set out during the night on some distant journey, whither no one in the Castle could divine.

It is impossible to paint the misery of Sir Pa-

trick Hepborne. Hope had been wound up to the highest pitch, and the most grievous disappointment was the issue. He was so much beside himself, that he was little master of his actions, and Mortimer Sang was obliged to remind him of the necessity of returning immediately to Melrose, to join his father, who, with the other Scottish nobles and knights, had resolved to stay there for the space of three days ere they should separate.

The warriors parted, with solemn vows uttered over the grave of the Douglas; and Sir Patrick Hepborne and his son, accompanied by the Earl of Moray, Assucton, Haliburton, and a number of other knights, set out for Hailes Castle. The Lady Isabelle was ready to receive them on their arrival. She sprang into the court-yard, to clasp her father and her brother to her bosom; and although modesty and maiden bashfulness checked those manifestations of love towards her knight, with which her heart overflowed, yet, as he kissed her hand, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled with a delight that could not be mistaken.

Among those who came out to welcome the warlike party, was old Gabriel Lindsay. Leaning on his staff on the threshold, he eagerly

scanned each face that came near him, with his dim eyes.

"Where is my gallant boy?" cried he. "I trow he need seldom fear to show his head where valorous deeds ha' been adoing; he hath had his share o' fame, I warrant me. Ha, Master Sang, welcome home. Where loitereth my gallant boy Robin? he useth not to be so laggard in meeting his old father, I wot. A plague on these burnt-out eyes of mine, I canna see him nowhere."

"Who can undertake the task of breaking poor Robert's death to the old man?" cried Sang, turning aside from him in the greatest distress. "Sure I am, that I would rather face the fierce phalanx of foes that did work his brave son's death, than tell him of the doleful tidings."

"Where hast thou left Robin, Master Sang?" said the doting old man again. "Ah, there he is; nay, fye on my blindness, that be's Richie Morton. Sure, sure my boy was never wont to be laggard last; 'twas but the last time he came home with Sir John Assueton, that he had his arms round my ould neck or ever I wist he was at hand: he thought, forsooth, I would not have kend him; but, ah ha, Robin, says I to him——"

"My worthy old friend," said Sang, quite unable any longer to stand his innocent garrulity, so ill befitting the reception of the bitter news he had to tell him, and taking his withered arm to assist him into the Castle, and leading him gently to his chamber—"my worthy friend, come this way, and I will tell thee of thy son—we shall be better here in private. Robert Lindsay's wonted valour shone forth with sun-like glory in the bloody field of Otterbourne; but——"

"Ah, full well did I know that he would bravely support the gallant name of Lindsay," cried the old man, interrupting him with a smile of exultation. "Trust me, the boy hath ever showed that he hath some slender streams of gentle blood in his veins; we are come of good kind, Master Sang, and maybe my boy Robin shall yet win wealth and honours to prove it. My great-great-grandfather—nay, my grandfather's great-great——"

"But, Robert," said Sang, wishing to bring old Gabriel back to the sad subject he was about to open.

"Ay, Robert, Master Sang," replied the old man, "where tarrieth he?"

"At Otterbourne," replied Sang, deeply affected. "Thy son, thy gallant son, fell glo-

riously, whilst nobly withstanding the whole force of the English line as they burst into our camp."

"What sayest thou, Master Sang?" said the infirm old man, who perfectly comprehended the speaker, but was so stunned by his fatal intelligence that his feeble intellect was confused by the blow—"what sayest thou, Master Sang?"

"Thy heroic son was slain," replied Sang, half choked with his emotions. "This lock of Robert Lindsay's hair, and these trinkets, taken from his person ere we committed his body to the earth, are all that thou canst ever see of him now, old man."

The esquire sat down, covered his face with his hands, and wept; and then endeavouring to command himself, he looked upward in the face of Gabriel Lindsay, who was standing before him like the decayed trunk of some mighty oak. The time-worn countenance of the old man was unmoved, and his dull eyes were fixed as in vacancy. The wandering so common to wasted age had come over his mind at that moment, sent, as it were, in mercy by Providence to blunt his perception of the dire affliction that had befallen him. Fitful smiles flashed at in-

tervals across his face—his lips moved without sound—and at last he spoke—

"And so thou sayest my boy will be here to-night, Master Sang, and that this is a lock of his bride's hair? It is golden, like his own; my blessing be on him, and that of St Baldrid. But why feared he to bring her to me attence? Ha, doubtless he thought that the joyful surprise mought ha'e made my blood dance till it brast my ould heart. But no, Master Sang, joy shall never do for me what sorrow hath failed to work. I lost his mother—lost her in a' her youth and beauty, and yet I bore it, and humbled myself before Him who giveth and who taketh away, and was comforted; and shall I sink beneath the weight of joy? Nay, even had he died in the midst of his glory, I trust I am still soldier enow, though I be's ould, to have borne the news of my son having fallen with honour to Scotland, and to the name of Lindsay; but doth he think that his ould father may not be told, without risk, how he hath fought bravely —how he was noticed by the gallant Douglas —and, aboon a', how he is now coming hame in triumph with a bonny gentle bride? And didst thou say they would be here to-night, Sir Squire? Fye, I must gang and tell Sir Patrick —and the brave young knight—and my Lady

Isabelle; they will all rejoice in old Gabriel's glad tidings. A bonny bride, thou sayest, Master Sang; and shall I yet have a babe o' Robin's on my knee or I die? But I must away to Sir Patrick."

He made an effort to go. Sang rose gently to detain him. He stopped—looked around him wildly—fastened his eyes vacantly for some moments on the ceiling—reason and recollection returned to him, and his dream of bliss passed away.

"Oh, merciful God!" he cried, clasping his hands together in an agony of woe. "Oh, my boy, my brave, my virtuous boy, and shall I never see thee more?"

Nature with him was already spent; its failure was instantaneous; his limbs yielded beneath him, and he sank down into the arms of the esquire, who hastily laid him on the bed, and ran for assistance. Sir Patrick Hepborne, his son, and the Lady Isabelle, as well as many of the domestics, quickly appeared in great consternation; but they came only to weep over the good old Seneschal—He was gone for ever.

The death of this old and faithful domestic threw a gloom over the Castle, so that Assueton felt that he could hardly press on his marriage day. At last, however, it was fixed. The

preparations were such as became the house of Hepborne; and the ceremony was performed in presence of some of the first nobles and knights of Scotland.

The Countess of Moray had come from Tarnawa to meet her lord. Sir Patrick Hepborne the younger eagerly sought an opportunity of having private conversation with her, hoping to have some explanation of the strange disappearance of his page. But the noble lady, maintaining the same distance towards him she had so mysteriously used, seemed rather disposed to shun the subject; and it was not until Hepborne had prefaced his inquiry with a full exposition of all he suspected, and all he knew, regarding the Lady Eleanore de Selby and the Lady Beatrice, and that she really saw where his heart was sincerely fixed, that she would consent to betray the secret she possessed. Hepborne was then assured that his page Maurice de Grey was no other than the Lady Beatrice.

Believing that Hepborne loved her, she had looked with joy to other meetings with him; she had been filled with anxiety when she heard of the encounter between him and Sir Rafe Piersie; and she was exulting in his triumph over that knight at the very moment they came to tell her of his departure. She hastened to a

window overlooking the Tweed, where she beheld the boat that was wafting him to Scotland. It was then, when she thought herself deserted, that she really felt that she loved. Almost unconscious of what she did, she waved her scarf. He replied not to the signal. Again and again she waved, and in vain she stretched her eyeballs to catch a return of the sign. The boat touched the strand; he sprang on shore, and leaped into his saddle. Again in despair she waved; the signal was returned, and that faint sign from the Scottish shore was to her as the twig of hope. So intense had been her feelings, that she sank down, overpowered by them. Recovering herself, she again gazed from the window. The ferry-boat had returned, and was again moored on the English side. She cast her eyes across to the spot where she had last beheld Sir Patrick. The animating figures were now gone; some yellow gravel, a green bank, a few furze-bushes, and a solitary willow—its slender melancholy spray waving in the breeze—were all that appeared, and her chilled and forsaken heart was left as desolate as the scene.

It was at this time that she was called on by friendship to dismiss her own griefs, that she might actively assist the high-spirited Eleanore de Selby. By the result of Sir Rafe Piersie's

visit, that lady was relieved from his addresses; but they were immediately succeeded by the strange proposals of her infatuated father, when deluded by the machinations of the Wizard Ancient. All her tears and all her eloquence were thrown away; and so perfect was Sir Walter's subjection to the will of the impostor, that even his temper was changed, and his affection for his daughter swallowed up, by his anxiety to avert the fate that threatened. Such coercion to a union so disgusting, might have roused the spirit of resistance in the most timid female bosom; but Eleanore de Selby, who was high and hot-tempered, resolved at once to fly from such persecution; and, taking a solemn vow from the Lady Beatrice that she would aid her scheme, and at the same time binding her to secrecy, she made her the confidante of a recent attachment which had arisen between her and a certain knight whom she had met at a tilting match held at Newcastle a short time before, when she was on a visit to a sister of her father's, who resided there. A meeting had taken place between the lovers; and it was the parting after that meeting which Hepborne had witnessed, that so filled him with jealousy. It was then, for the first time, that the

Lady Eleanore informed her friend that her lover was Sir Hans de Vere, a knight of Zealand, kinsman to the King's banished favourite the Duke of Ireland, who had lately come from abroad, and who looked to gain the same high place in King Richard's affections which the Duke himself had filled.

Having thus been gradually, though unwillingly, drawn to assist in the Lady Eleanore's plans, Beatrice felt that she could not stay behind, to expose herself to the rage of the bereft father. Having assisted her friend, therefore, to escape, she accompanied her, in male attire, to the place where her lover waited for her, at some distance from Norham. There she parted, with many tears, from the companion of her youth, having received from her the emerald ring which Sir Patrick Hepborne afterwards became possessed of. Her own depression of spirits, occasioned by Sir Patrick's unaccountable desertion of her, had determined her to seek out some convent, where she might find a temporary, if not a permanent retreat. Under the protection of old Adam of Gordon, therefore, she crossed the Tweed into Scotland. There he procured her a Scottish guide to conduct her to North Berwick, where he had a relation among the Cistertian nuns, and thither she was

proceeding at the time she met Hepborne in the grove, by the side of the Tyne.

When Sir Patrick addressed her, she felt so much fluttered, that it was some time before she could invent a plausible account of herself; and when he proposed to her to become his page, love triumphed over her better judgment, and she could not resist the temptation of an offer that held out so fair an opportunity of knowing more of him, and of trying the state of his heart. As to the latter, she became convinced, by some of those conversations we have detailed, that she had been cruelly deceived, and that she had in reality no share in it. She heard him passionately declare his unextinguishable love for the Lady Eleanore de Selby, and when he said that he had seen too much of her for his peace of mind, she naturally enough concluded that they had met together on some former occasion. She became unhappy at her own imprudence in so rashly joining his party, and was anxious to avail herself of the first opportunity of escaping from one whose heart never could be hers. The Countess of Moray's kindness to her as Maurice de Grey induced her to discover herself to that lady. She earnestly entreated that she might remain concealed, and that Sir Patrick might not be informed. It was

the Lady Jane de Vaux who laid the plan for deceiving him about the departure of his page, and she and the Countess of Moray could not resist indulging in tormenting one, whom they believed to have wantonly sported with the affections of the Lady Beatrice, and who had consequently suffered deeply in the good opinion of both.

The minstrel, who, to do away suspicion, had returned to Norham immediately after the escape of the ladies, no sooner learned from the guide the change that had taken place in Beatrice's plans, and that she had gone to Tarnawa, than he determined to follow her thither, under pretence of going to the tournament. Having learned from him that her benefactor, Sir Walter de Selby, had been overwhelmed with affliction for the loss of his daughter, of whose fate he was yet ignorant, and that he had also grievously complained of her own desertion of him, she was filled with remorse, and determined to return to him immediately, and to brave all his reproaches; but indisposition, arising from the trying fatigue of body and the mental misery she had undergone, prevented her setting out until several days after the departure of the Earl of Moray and his knights for Aberdeen. Hepborne could now no longer doubt of the attachment

of the Lady Beatrice. The thought that he had ignorantly thrown away a heart so valuable as that which his intercourse with his page had given him ample opportunity to know, was a source of bitter distress to him. His spirits fled, he loathed society, and he industriously shunned the huntings, hawkings, dancings, and masquings, that were going merrily forward, in honour of his friend's nuptials with his sister the Lady Isabelle.

But Assueton was not so selfishly occupied in his own joys as not to be struck with the change in his beloved Hepborne. He besought him to unbosom the secret sorrow that was so evidently preying on his mind, and Sir Patrick, who had hitherto generously concealed it, that he might not poison the happiness in which he could not participate, at last yielded to entreaty, and told him all. Sir John had but little of comfort to offer; the subject was one that hardly admitted of any. He saw that the only way in which friendship could be useful was by rousing him to something that might actively divert his melancholy.

Sir David de Lindsay having returned from his captivity in England, had lately arrived at Hailes, where Sir William de Dalzel and Sir John Haliburton had remained, to witness As-

sueton's marriage. They were now about to proceed to London, to make good the pledge given to the Lord Welles. Hepborne would have fain excused himself from the engagement he had so cheerfully made with them at Tarnawa, but Assueton contrived to pique his chivalric spirit, and at length succeeded in inducing him to become one of the party. Sir John even offered to accompany his friend, but Hepborne would by no means permit him to leave his newly-married lady.

CHAPTER VIII.

EVERYTHING that art could achieve, by means of steel, gold, embossing, embroidery, and emblazoning, was done to give splendour to the array of Sir David Lindsay, and his companions and attendants, that Scotland should, if possible, be in no whit behind England upon this occasion. A safe-conduct was readily granted them by the English court, and they departed, all high in spirits, save Hepborne alone, who seemed to suffer the journey rather than to enjoy it. They travelled very leisurely, and frequently halted by the way, that their horses might not be oppressed; and they were everywhere received with marked respect.

It was towards the end of the third week that they found themselves crossing a wide glade among those immense forests which then covered the country, lying immediately to the north of the English metropolis, when they were attracted by an encampment of gay pavilions, pitched

among the then skirting trees. A strong guard of archers, and well-mounted lances, that patrolled around the place, proved that there was some one there of no mean consequence. Within the circle was a vast and motley crowd of people, moving about in all the rich and varied costumes which then prevailed. There could be descried many nobles, knights, and esquires, some equipt in fanciful hunting-garbs, and others in all the foppery of golden circlets, flowing robes, party-coloured hose, and long-pointed shoes, attached to knee-chains of gold and silver; and these were mingled with groups of huntsmen, falconers, pages, grooms, lacqueys, and even hosts of cooks and scullions. Many were on horseback, and whole rows of beautiful horses were picketted in different places, and their neighing mingled cheerily with the baying of tied-up hounds, and the hum of many merry voices.

It was a spectacle well calculated to arrest the attention of the Scottish knights, and accordingly they halted to enjoy it, and to listen to the trumpets and timbrels that now began to sound. In a little time they observed a party of horsemen leave the encampment, and they were soon aware that it came to meet them. At the head was a knight clad in a white hunting-

coif richly flowered with gold, and a sky-blue gippon of the most costly materials, thickly wrought with embroidery, while the toes of his tawny boots being released from their knee-chains, hung down nearly a yard from his stirrup-irons. On his wrist sat a falcon, the badge of a knight; he rode a superb horse, and his housings corresponded in grandeur with everything else belonging to him.

"Ha!" exclaimed he, as he reined up his steed affectedly in front of the group, raised himself in his high-peaked saddle, and, standing in his stirrups, put his bridle-hand to his side, as if selecting the attitude best calculated to show off his uncommonly handsome person; "ha! so I see that my divination doth prove to have been true to most miraculous exactitude. My Lord of Welles must forfeit an hundred pieces, in compliment to my superior accuracy of vision and of judgment. Sir David de Lindsay, I knew thy banner. I do give thee welcome to England, beausir; nay, I may add, welcome to London too, seeing thou art barely two leagues from its walls, and that the very spirit of its greatness is here in these sylvan solitudes, in the person of the royal Richard, attended as he is by his chivalrous court."

"Sir Piers Courtenay," exclaimed Sir David

de Lindsay, "perdie, it doth rejoice me to behold thee, strangers as we are, in these parts."

"Trust me, ye shall be strangers no longer, gentle sir," replied Sir Piers, with a condescending inclination of body, that he now deigned to continue round, with his eyes directed to the other knights severally, whom he had not noticed until now. "When I, with singularly fortunate instinct, did assert that it was thee and thy bandon we beheld, the Lord Welles did wager me an hundred pieces that I did err in sagacity; but as I parted from him to ride hither, to bring mine accuracy to the proof, he charged me, if I were right, to invite thee and thy company to the royal camp."

"Travel-worn and dust-begrimed as we are," said Sir William de Dalzel, "meseems we shall be but sorry sights for the eyes of royalty, especially amid a crowd of gallants so glittering as the sample thou hast brought us in thine own sweet and perfumed person, beausir."

"Nay, nay," replied Sir Piers Courtenay, glancing with contempt at Dalzel's war-worn surcoat, and taking his ironical remark as an actual compliment, "we are but accoutred, as thou seest, for rustic sport; we are shorn of our beams among the shades of these forests. But let us not tarry, I pray thee; the sports

of the morning are already over; the sylvan meal is about to be spread in the grand pavilion, and rude though it be, it may not come amiss to those who have already travelled since dawn. Let us hasten thither, then, for the King doth return to London after feeding."

Under the guidance of this pink of fashion, the Scottish knights advanced towards the royal hunting-encampment; and long ere they reached it, the Lord Welles, who already saw that he had lost his wager, came forth to meet them, and received them with all that warmth of hospitality which characterised the English people of all ranks even in those early days, and for which they were already famed among foreign nations. He led them through a mass of guards, who, though they appeared but to form a part of the pageantry of the royal sports, were yet so completely armed, both men and horses, that it was manifest security from sudden surprise was the chief object of their being placed there.

Sir David Lindsay and his companions, after quitting their saddles, were led by the Lord Welles to his own tent, where they soon rendered themselves fit to appear before royal eyes. They were then conducted to the King's pavilion, which they found surrounded by a strong

body of archers, and they had no sooner entered the outer part of it than they were introduced to the Earls of Kent and Huntingdon, half brothers to the King, who were in waiting. These were now Richard's chief favourites, since the late banishment of De Vere, Duke of Ireland, and others. By these noblemen they were immediately introduced into the royal presence.

The young Richard was not deficient in that manly beauty possessed by his heroic father, the nation's idol, Edward the Black Prince, but his countenance was softened by many of those delicate traits which gave to his lovely mother the appellation of the Fair Maid of Kent. His eyes, though fine and full, were of unsteady expression, frequently displaying a certain confidence in self-opinion, that suddenly gave way to doubt and hesitation. Though the dress he had on was of the same shape as that worn by his courtiers, being that generally used by noblemen of the period when hunting; yet, costly as was the attire of those around him, his was most conspicuous among them all, by the rich nature of the materials of which it was composed, as well as by the massive and glittering ornaments he wore. The gorgeous furniture of his temporary residence too, with the endless numbers of splendidly-habited domestics who waited, might have

been enough of themselves to have explained to the Scottish knights whence that dissatisfaction arose among his subjects, who were compelled to contribute to expenditure so profuse.

The King's natural disposition to be familiar with all who approached him, would of itself have secured a gracious reception to Sir David de Lindsay and his companions; but the cause of their visit made them doubly welcome. Their coming ensured him an idle show and an empty pageant, which would furnish him with an apology for making fresh draughts on his already over-drained people. Every honour, therefore, was paid them, as if they had been public ambassadors from the nation to which they belonged, and the most conspicuous places were assigned them at that luxurious board where the royal collation was spread, and where, much as they had seen, their eyes were utterly confounded by the profusion of rarities that appeared.

The King had been hunting for nearly a week in these suburban wilds, and he was now about to return to his palace in the Tower, which he at this time preferred as a residence to that of Westminster. But the pleasures of the table, seasoned by dissolute conversation with the profligate knights, and coarse ladies, who were most encouraged at his court, together with that

indolence into which he was so apt to sink, had at all times too great charms for him to permit him easily to move from them. He therefore allowed the hours to pass in epicurean indulgence, whilst he gazed on the wanton attitudes of the women who danced before him, or on the feats of jugglers and tumblers.

At length the camp was ordered to be broken up, and then the whole royal attention became occupied in the arrangement of the cavalcade, so that it might produce the most imposing effect, and the humblest individuals were not considered as unworthy of a King's notice on so important an occasion. All were soon put into the wished-for order, and Richard himself figured most prominently of all, proudly mounted on a magnificently-caparisoned horse, having housings that swept the ground. A canopy was borne over him by twelve esquires, and he was surrounded by his archers. Sir David de Lindsay and his companions formed a part of this pageant, which they failed not to remark was carefully defended on all sides by well-armed horsemen.

From the summit of an eminence the Scottish knights caught their first view of London, then clustered into small space within its confined walls. It seemed to be tied like a knot,

as it were, on the winding thread of the majestic Thames, which, after washing the walls of the Palace of Westminster, flowed thence gently along its banks, fringed by the gardens and scattered country-dwellings of the nobility and richer citizens, until it was lost for a time amid the smoke arising from the dusky mass of the city, to appear farther down with yet greater brilliancy. The sun was already getting low, and was shooting its rays aslant through the thick atmosphere that hung over the town. They caught on its most prominent points, and brought fully into notice, the venerable tower and spire of the then Gothic St Paul's, and the steeples of the few churches and monasteries which the city contained, together with its turreted walls and its castles. All between the partially wooded slope they stood on and the gates was one wild pasture, partly covered with heath, interspersed with thickets, and partly by swamps, and a large lake.

As they drew nearer to the city, they passed by crowds of young citizens engaged in athletic exercises. Some were wrestling; others, mounted on spirited horses and armed with lances, were tilting at the quintaine, or jousting with wooden points against each other. In one place they were shooting with bows at a mark; and

in another, groups of young men and damsels were seen dancing under the shade of trees, to the gratification of many a father and mother who looked on. Besides these, the ground was peopled by venders of refreshments; and, in diverse corners, jugglers and posture-masters were busy with their tricks before knots of wondering mechanics. So keenly were all engaged, that the royal hunting party, carefully as the order of its march had been prepared, passed by unheeded, or, if noticed at all, it was by a secret curse from some of the disaffected, who grudged to see that Richard had been hunting in that part of the forest which it was more particularly the privilege of the citizens of London to use. Nor did the haughty courtiers regard these humbler people, except to indulge in many a cutting jest at their expense, which Richard's ready laugh of approbation showed they were thoroughly licensed to do.

"We have seen some such jousting as this before," said Courtenay, with a sly toss of his head, immediately after an awkward exhibition that had accidentally attracted notice.

"Yea, so have I too," observed Dalzel calmly; "I did once see ane English knight tilt so on the Mead of St John's."

Crossing the broad ditch of the city by a draw-

bridge, they made their entry between the towers of Cripplegate, having its name from the swarms of beggars by which it was generally infested, and they immediately found themselves in narrow streets of wooden houses, uncouthly projecting as they rose upwards, and detached shops, which were already shut up for the day. Here and there the windows were decorated with coloured cloths or carpets, and some few idle vagabonds ran after the cavalcade, crying out, "Long live King Richard!" looking to be recompensed for their mercenary loyalty by liberal largess. But the respectable citizens were already enjoying their own recreation in the Moorfields, those who did remain having little inclination to join in the cry, where the Monarch was so unpopular; and many a sturdy black-muzzled mechanic went scowling off the street, to hide in some dark lane, as he saw the procession approaching, bestowing his malediction on that heartless prodigality and luxury which robbed him and his infants to supply its diseased appetite. Hepborne and Haliburton, who rode together, could not help remarking this want of loyal feeling towards the young English Monarch; and calling to mind the enthusiasm with which they had seen the aged King Robert of Scotland, in his grey woollen

hose, greeted by his people, they began to suspect that there must be faults of no trifling sort in a Prince to whom nature had given so pleasing an exterior.

Having got within the fortifications of the Tower, the Scottish knights were astonished with the immense army of the minions of luxury who filled its courts. The King himself signified his pleasure to Sir David Lindsay and his friends that they should enter the royal apartments, where they partook of wine and spices, handed about in rich golden cups; after which a banquet followed, in a style of magnificence calculated to make everything they had before seen be altogether forgotten in comparison with it. The King honoured them with his peculiar attention, and even deigned to attend to making provision for their proper accommodation. For this purpose, he called for the Lord Welles, and gave him a list of those persons who were to be honoured with the expense of lodging and entertaining these strangers and their people. With singular contradiction to his own wish that they should be treated with exemplary hospitality, he chose to select as their hosts, certain persons who had offended him, and whom he had a desire to punish by thus exposing them to great expense; and so the strangers were thrown

into situations where anything but voluntary kindness might be looked for.

When the King gave them their leave, they found their esquires in waiting for them. Mortimer Sang led Hepborne into the Vintry, to the house of a certain Lawrence Ratcliffe, a wine-merchant. His dwelling was within a gateway and court-yard, on each side of which there were long rows of warehouses, and vaults extending nearly quite down to the river-wall.

It was dark when Sir Patrick entered the court-yard, and as he passed onwards to where he saw a lamp burning within the doorway of the dwelling-house, he heard the voice of a man issuing from an outbuilding.

"Jehan Petit," said the person, who spoke to some one who followed him, "see that thou dost give out no wine to this Scot, but of that cargo, the which did ship the sea-water, and that tastes brackish. An the King will make us maintain all his strange cattle, by St Paul, but as far as I have to do with them, they shall content themselves with such feeding as it may please me to bestow. Let the esquire and the other trash have sour ale, 'tis good enow for the knaves; and I promise thee it will well enow match the rest of their fare, and the herborow they shall have. Alas, poor England!

ay, and above all, alas, poor London! for an we have not a change soon, we shall be eaten up by the King's cormorants, a plague rot 'em!"

By this time Hepborne and his landlord met in the stream of light that issued from the open doorway. Hepborne made a courteous though dignified obeisance to Master Ratcliffe, a stout elderly man, whose face showed that he had not been at all negligent during his life in tasting, that he might have personal knowledge of what was really good before he ventured to give it to his friends. The wine-merchant was taken somewhat at unawares. He had made up his mind to be as cross and as rude as he well could to the guest that had been thus forced upon him. But Hepborne's polite deportment commanded a return from a man who had been in France, and he bent to the stranger with a much better grace than he could have wished to have bestowed on him.

"I do address myself to Master Lawrence Ratcliffe, if I err not?" said Hepborne, in a civil tone.

"Yea, I am that man," replied the other, recovering something of his sulky humour.

"Master Ratcliffe," said Hepborne, with great civility of manner, "I understand that his Majesty the King of England's hospitality

to strangers hath been the cause of throwing me to thy lot. But I cannot suffer his kindness to a Scottish knight to do injury to a worthy citizen of his own good city of London. To keep me and my people in thy house, would run thee into much trouble, not to talk of the expense, the which no man of trade can well bear. I come, therefore, to entreat thee to permit me to rid thee and thy house of unbidden guests, who cannot choose but give thee great annoy, and to crave thine advice as to what inn or hostel I should find it most convenient to remove to. By granting me this, thou wilt make me much beholden to thee."

Master Lawrence Ratcliffe looked at Hepborne with no small astonishment. This was a sort of behaviour to which he had been but little used, and for which he was by no means prepared.

"Nay, by St Stephen, Sir Knight, thou shalt not move," said he at last; "by all the blessed saints, thou shalt have the best bed and the best food that London can furnish; yea, and wine, too, the which, let me tell thee, the King himself cannot command. Go, get the key of the trap-cellar, Jehan Petit," said he, turning briskly to his attendant; "bring up some flasks of

the right bourdeaux and malvoisie. Thou dost well know their marks, I wot."

"Nay, send him not for wine, I pray thee, good Master Ratcliffe," cried Hepborne; "I trow I have already drank as much as may be seemly for this night."

"Chut," cried the wine-merchant, with a face of glee, "all that may be; yet shall we drain a flask to our better acquaintance. Fly, sirrah Jehan! This way, Sir Knight. Would that Heaven mought send us a flight of such rare birds as thou art; thine ensample mought peraunter work a change on these all-devouring vultures of King Richard's court. This way, Sir Knight. Have a care—there be an evil step there."

Master Lawrence Ratcliffe ushered Hepborne into a very handsomely-furnished apartment, the walls of which were hung round with costly cloths. It was largely supplied with velvet and silk covered chairs, and with many an ancient cabinet, and it was lighted by a small silver lamp. They were hardly seated, when a lacquey brought in a silver basket of sweetmeats and dried fruits, and soon afterwards Jehan Petit appeared with the venerable flasks for which Master Ratcliffe had dispatched him. It was with some difficulty that Hepborne could pre-

vent the liberal Englishman from ordering a sumptuous banquet to be prepared, by declaring that repose, not food, was what he now required; but he made up for this check on his hospitality, by giving ample directions for the comfort of all the members of Hepborne's retinue, quadrupeds as well as bipeds. The wine was nectar, yet Hepborne drank but little of it; but Master Ratcliffe did ample duty for both.

"I fear, Sir Knight, that thy people were but scurvily treated ere thou camest," said he to Hepborne; "but, in good verity, I have too much of this free-quartering thrust upon me by the Court. I promise thee, King Richard is not always content with his two tuns out of each of my wine-ships. By'r Lady, he doth often help himself to ten tuns at a time from these cellars of mine, and that, too, as if he were doing me high honour all the while. It did so happen lately, that he lacked some hundreds of broad pieces for his immediate necessities. Down came my Lord of Huntingdon, with his bows and fair words. 'Master Lawrence Ratcliffe,' said he, 'it is his Majesty's royal pleasure to do thee an especial honour.'—'What,' cried I, 'my Lord of Huntingdon, doth the King purpose to make an earl of me?'—'Nay, not quite that,' replied his lordship, somewhat offended at my boldness, 'not

quite that, Master Ratcliffe; but knowing that thou art one of the richest merchants of his good city of London, he hath resolved to prefer thee to be his creditor, rather than any other. Lend him, therefore, five hundred pieces for a present necessity. And seeing it was I who did bring this high honour upon thy shoulders, by frequently enlarging to the King of thy princely wealth, thou mayest at same time lend me fifty pieces from thine endless hoards, for mine own private use.'—'My lord,' replied I, 'seeing that thou thyself hast been altogether misinformed as to my wealth, thou mayest hie thee back speedily to undeceive the King, else may the royal wrath peradventure be poured out upon thee, for filling his ear with that which lacketh foundation. I have no money-hoards to play the Jew withal.'—'Nay, then,' replied Huntingdon, with a threatening aspect, 'thou mayest look for the King's wrath falling on thine own head, not on mine. By St Paul, thou shalt repent thee of this thy discourteous conduct to the King.'—The profligate Earl was hardly gone, when I felt that I had permitted my indignation to carry me too far, and that it would have been wiser to have paid five times the demand, and I soon had proof of this. I judged it best to pay the money; yet hardly hath a week

elapsed sithence that I have not been tormented in a thousand ways, by orders from the Court. But, by'r Lady, such a state of things may not last," said he, after a pause; and then starting, as if he thought he had perhaps said too much, "for what poor merchant's coffers may stand out against such drafts as these? And now, Sir Knight, thou mayest judge why I was resolved to receive thee so vilely. But thou mayest thank thine own courtesy for so speedily disarming my resolution."

On the ensuing morning, the Lord Welles came, by the King's order, to wait on Sir David Lindsay, and to invite him and his companions to a royal banquet, to be given that day at the palace of Westminster, whither they were to go in grand procession by land, and to return by water to the Tower at night. The Scottish knights, therefore, joined the royal party, and leaving the city by Ludgate, descended into the beautiful country which bordered the Thames, their eyes delighted, as they rode along, by the appearance of the suburban palaces and gardens which lay scattered along the river's bank. Passing through the village of Charing, they approached the venerable abbey and palace of Westminster, and were received within the fortified walls of the latter. The entertainment

given in the magnificent hall was on a scale of extravagance perfectly appalling, both as to number of dishes and rarity of the viands; and the aquatic pageant of painted boats was no less wonderful. It was impossible for the poor commons to behold the money wrenched from their industry thus scattered in a useless luxury that but little nourished their trade or manufactures, or at least could not appear to their ignorance to have such a tendency, without their becoming disaffected; and, accordingly, every new pageant of this kind only added to the mass of the malcontents.

The handsome Courtenay had this day outshone all his former splendour of attire.

"Didst thou remark that popinjay Sir Piers Courtenay?" demanded Sir William de Dalzel, as they were returning in the boat; "didst thou mark the bragging device on his azure silk surcoat?"

"I did note it," replied Halyburton; "a falcon embroidered in divers silks, that did cunningly ape the natural colours of the bird."

"Yea, but didst thou note the legend too?" continued Sir William de Dalzel. "It ran thus, methinks:—

'I bear a falcon fairest of flight,
Whoso pinches at her his death is dight
In graith.'"

"Ha," said Hepborne, "by Saint Andrew, a fair challenge to us all; the more, too, that it doth come after the many taunts he did slyly throw out against Scottish chivalry at Tarnawa. But he shall not lack a hand to pinch at his falcon, for I shall do it this night, lest the braggart should change his attire."

"Nay, nay, leave him to me, I entreat thee," said Sir William de Dalzel. "He is mine by right, seeing I did first note his arrogant motto. Trust me, I shall not leave London without bringing down this empty peacock, so that he shall be the laughing-stock of his own companions."

On the plea of giving sufficient repose to the Scottish champion, Richard ordained that yet three more days should pass ere the joust should take place between Sir David Lindsay and the Lord Welles; and the time was spent in divers amusements, and in balls, masquings, and feastings.

At length the day of the tilting arrived, and everything had been done to make the exhibition a splendid one. Triumphal arches had been erected in several parts of Thames Street; and the inhabitants were compelled by royal proclamation to garnish their windows with flowers and boughs, and to hang out cloths and car-

pets; while many of those who had houses on London Bridge were forced by an edict to vacate their dwellings, for the use of the King and such of his courtiers and attendants as he chose to carry thither with him. These houses were wretched enough in themselves, being frail wooden tenements, arising from each side of the Bridge, partly founded on it, so as to narrow its street to about twenty-three feet, and partly resting on posts driven into the bed of the stream, so that they hung half over the water, and were, in some cases, only saved from falling backwards into it by strong wooden arches that crossed the street from one house to another, and bound them together.

The royal procession was to be arranged in the Tower-yard, and, in obedience to the commands of King Richard, the Scottish knights repaired thither to take their place in it. The banner of Sir David Lindsay, bearing gules, a fess cheque argent and azure, with his crest an ostrich proper, holding in his beak a key or, appeared conspicuous; and his whole party, esquires, as well as knights, were mounted and armed in a style that was by no means disgraceful to poor Scotland, though in costliness of material and external glitter they were much eclipsed by the English knights. Of these Sir

Piers Courtenay, who was to perform the part of second to the Lord Welles, seemed resolved to be second to none in outward show. His tilting-helmet was surmounted by a plume that was perfectly matchless, and there the falcon, which on this occasion he had chosen as his crest, was proudly nestled. His coat of mail was covered with azure silk. The belt for his shield, and the girdle-stead for his sword, were of crimson velvet, richly ornamented with golden studs and precious stones. The roundels on his shoulders and elbows were, or at least appeared to be, of gold. His mamillieres were of wrought gold ornamented with gems, and heavy golden chains, of sufficient length not to impede his full action when using the weapon, depended from them, so as to attach the hilt of his sword to his right breast, and the scabbard of it to his left. His sword and his dagger were exquisite both as to materials and workmanship; but what most attracted attention was the azure silken surcoat embroidered with the falcon upon it, and the vaunting motto:—

> "I bear a falcon fairest of flight,
> Whoso pinches at her his death is dight
> In graith."

Courtenay rode about, making his horse per-

form many a fanciful curvet, full of self-approbation, and throwing many a significant glance towards the Scottish party, as he capered by them, evidently with the desire of provoking some one among them to accept the mute and general challenge he gave, and winking to his friends at the same time, as if he believed that there was little chance of its being noticed. The sagacious Sir John Constable and some others said all they could to check his impertinent foolery, but their friendly advices were thrown away on the coxcomb.

All being prepared, King Richard was becoming impatient to move off, when it was signified to him, that Sir William de Dalzel, who was to be second to Sir David de Lindsay, had not yet appeared. The King ordered an esquire to hasten to his lodgings to tell him he was waited for, when just at that moment a knight appeared attired in a style of splendour that was only to be equalled by Sir Piers Courtenay himself; but what was more wonderful, he seemed to be in every respect the very double of that magnificent cavalier. All eyes were directed towards him, and when he came nearer, the King himself gave way to immoderate fits of laughter, in which he was heartily joined by every one in the court-yard, down to the lowest

groom; in short, by all save one, and that was Sir Piers Courtenay.

This second edition of the English exquisite was Sir William de Dalzel, who, having found out before-hand what Courtenay was to appear in, had contrived, with great exertion, pains, and expense, to fit himself with a surcoat and appendages exactly resembling those of the coxcomb; with this difference only, that his azure silk surcoat had on it a magpie, embroidered with divers coloured threads, with this motto:

> "I bear a pie pykkand at ane piece,
> Whasa pykes at her I sall pyke at his nese,
> In faith."

The laugh continued, whilst the square-built Dalzel rode about with his vizor up, wearing a well-dissembled air of astonishment, as if he could by no means divine what it was that gave rise to so much merriment. But Courtenay could bear it no longer. He even forgot the royal presence of Richard, which, however, was but seldom wont to throw much awe over those with whom he was in the habit of being familiar.

"By the body of Saint George," exclaimed Courtenay, riding up to Dalzel, "thou hast attired thyself, Sir Scot, but in mockery of me. By the holy St Erkenwold, thou shalt speedily answer for thine unknightly rudeness."

"Nay, by the body of St Andrew, Sir Englishman, the which I do take to be an oath that ought to match thine," said Dalzel, with great coolness, seasoned with an air of waggery, "I do in no wise insult thee by mine attire, more than thine attire doth insult me. Perdie, on the contraire, I do but give thee infinite honour, in the strict observance of thine excellent fashion. Didst thou not, with great condescension, bestow upon the Scottish chivauncie at Tarnawa, myself being one, full many a wise saw on the super-eminent judgment of English knights, or rather of thyself, the cream of all English knighthood, in matters of dress and arming? Didst thou not discuss it buckle by buckle? Hither then am I come, in all my clownishness, to profit by thy wisdom; and such being mine errand, how, I pray thee, can I do better than copy thee to the nail—thou, I say, who canst so well teach me to put on a brave golden outside, where peradventure the inner metal may be but leaden?"

"By the rood of St Paul," cried Courtenay, "thine evil-chosen attirement was but small offence, compared to that thou hast now heaped on me by thy sarcastic commentary on it. I will hear no more. There!" said he, dashing down his gauntlet on the pavement. "With

permission of the royal presence, in which I now am, I do hereby challenge thee to combat of outrance, to be fought after the tilting-match."

"Nay, sith that thou wilt fly thy fair falcon at my poor pie," said Dalzel, "and run his head into my very talons with thy eagerness, by the blessed bones of St Dunstan, I will pinch her as well as ever the monk did the beak of the Evil One;" and saying so, he leaped from his saddle, and taking up the gauntlet, stuck it in his helmet.

The procession being now formed, moved off, in order and with sound of trumpet, by the Tower-gate, and so along Thames Street, towards the bridge, where the royal party were accommodated in the balconies and windows of the central houses, close to where the shock of the encounter was expected to take place. The bridge was then cleared of all obstacles, and the gates at either end were shut so as to act as barriers to keep out all but the combatants or those who waited on them.

The scene was now very imposing. The antique wooden fronts of the houses, of different projections and altitudes, approaching nearer and nearer to each other, as they rose story above story, till they came so close at top as to

leave but a mere riband's breadth of sky visible; the endless variety of windows and balconies, decorated with webs of various-coloured cloths, tapestry, and painted emblazonments; the arches that crossed from one side of the way to the other, hung with pennons and streamers of every possible shade; the Gothic tower that rose from one part of the bridge, where the banner of England waved from a flag-staff set among the grizzly heads of many a victim of tyranny, as well as many a traitor, among which last that of Wat Tyler was then conspicuous; and these, contrasted with the crowds of gay knights and ladies who shone within the lattices and balconies, the gorgeous band of heralds, the grotesque trumpeters, and musicians of all kinds, and the whimsical attire of the numerous attendants on the lists, were objects singularly romantic in themselves, and the effect of them was heightened by the courtly subdued whisper that murmured along on both sides, mingling with the deafened sound of the river dashing against the sterlings of the bridge underneath.

It being signified to the King that the knights were ready, he ordered the speaker of the lists to give the word, "Hors, chevaliers!" and the heralds' trumpets blew. The barriers at both ends of the bridge were then opened, and Sir Da-

vid Lindsay entered from the north, attended by Sir William de Dalzel. The Lord Welles and Sir Piers Courtenay, who had purposely crossed into what is now Southwark, appeared from that direction. The trumpets then sounded from both ends of the lists, and the challenge was proclaimed by one herald on the part of the Lord Welles, and accepted by another on the part of Sir David de Lindsay, while the articles of agreement as to the terms of combat, which had been regularly drawn up and signed by both parties at Tarnawa, were read from the balcony of the heralds. The combatants then rode slowly from each end until they met and measured lances, when their arms were examined by the marshal, and their persons searched to ascertain that neither carried charms or enchantments about him. The knights then crossed each other, and each attended by his companion and one esquire, rode slowly along to the opposite end of the bridge, and then returned each to his own place, by this means showing themselves fully to the spectators. The Lord Welles was mounted on a bright bay horse, and Sir David Lindsay rode a chesnut, both of great powers. But the figures, and still more the colours, of the noble animals, were hid beneath their barbed chamfrons and their sweeping silken housings.

The King now gave his royal signal for the joust to begin, by the usual words, "Laissez les aller," and the heralds having repeated them aloud, the trumpets sounded, and they flew towards each other with furious impetus, the fire flashing from the stones as they came on. An anxious murmur rushed along the line of spectators, eagerly were their heads thrust forward to watch the result. The combatants met, and both lances were shivered. That of Sir David Lindsay took his opponent in the shield, and had nearly unseated him, whilst he received the point of the Lord Welles right in the midst of his ostrich-crested casque; but although the concussion was so great, as to make both horses reel backwards, yet the Scottish knight sat firm as a rock. The seconds now came up, and new lances being given to the combatants, each rode slowly away to his own barrier, to await the signal for the next course.

It was given, and again the two knights rushed to the encounter, and again were the lances shivered with a similar result. Sir David Lindsay received his adversary's point full in the bars of his vizor, yet he sat unmoved, as if he had been but the human half of a Centaur. A murmur ran along among the spectators; with some it was applause for his steadiness of seat, but with

by far the greater number it was dissatisfaction. It grew in strength, and at length loud murmurs arose.

"He is tied to his saddle—Sir David de Lindsay is tied to his saddle—Never had mortal man a seat so firm without the aid of trick or fallas—Prove him, prove him—Let him dismount if he can!"

Sir David Lindsay soon satisfied them. He sprung to the ground, making the bridge ring again with the weight of his harness, and walking up opposite to the balcony, where the King sat, he made his obeisance to Majesty. His well-managed horse followed him like a dog, and the knight, after thus satisfying the Monarch and every one of the falsehood of the charge that had been made against him, leaped again into his saddle, armed as he was. Hitherto the choice breeding of those who were present had confined the applause to the mere courtly clapping of hands. But now they forgot that they were nobles, knights, and ladies of high degree, and the continued shout that arose might have done honour to the most plebeian lungs.

The combatants now again returned each to his barrier. The trumpets again sounded, and again the generous steeds sprang to their full

speed. But now it was manifest that Sir David Lindsay was in earnest, and that he had hardly been so before, was proved by the tremendous violence of the shock with which his blunt lance head came in contact with the neck-piece of the Lord Welles, who was lifted as it were from his saddle, and tossed some yards beyond his horse. So terrific was the effect of Sir David Lindsay's weapon, that the operation of the lance borne by the Lord Welles was so absolutely overlooked, that no one could tell what it had been, and so admirably was Lindsay's skill and strength displayed by this sudden and terrible overthrow of his opponent, that the spectators, with all the honest impartiality of Englishmen and Englishwomen, shouted as loudly as if the triumph had been with their own champion, when the trumpets proclaimed the victory of the Scottish knight.

The gallant Lindsay leaped from his horse, and, altogether unheeding the praises that were showering upon him, ran to lift up his opponent, who lay without motion. With the assistance of the seconds and the esquires, he raised him, and his helmet being unlaced, he was discovered to be in a swoon, and it was judged that he was severely bruised. A litter was im-

mediately brought, and the discomfited knight speedily carried off to his lodgings in the Tower. Meanwhile, Lindsay's attention was called by the voice of the King.

"Sir David de Lindsay," said he, addressing him from his balcony, "we do heartily give thee joy of thy victory. Thou hast acquitted thyself like a true and valiant knight. Come up hither, that we may bestow our royal guerdon on thee."

Lindsay ran up stairs to the balcony where the King sat, and kneeling on one knee before him,—

"Accept this gemmed golden chain, in token of Richard's approbation of thy prowess," said the Monarch, throwing the chain over his neck; "and now thou hast full leave to return to thine own country when thou mayest be pleased so to do, bearing with thee safe-conduct through the realm of England."

"Most royal sir," said Lindsay, "I shall bear this thy gift as my proudest badge; but may I crave thy gracious leave to tarry at thy court until I do see that the Lord Welles is restored to health by the leeches. Verily I should return but sadly into Scotland, did I believe that I had caused aught of serious evil to so brave a lord."

"Nay, that at thy discretion, Sir Knight," replied Richard; "our court shall be but the prouder while graced by such a flower of chivalry as thyself."

Lindsay bowed his thanks, and then retreated from the applauses which rang in his ears, that he might hasten to follow the Lord Welles to his lodgings, where he took his place by his bed-side, and began to execute the duties of a nurse, rarely quitting him for many days, that is, until his cure was perfected.

Lindsay was no sooner gone than the gay Sir Piers Courtenay, who had by this time mounted, and who had been all along writhing under the ridicule which Sir William Dalzel had thrown upon him, now prepared to give his challenge in form. Bringing his horse's head round to front the royal balcony, and backing him with the most perfect skill, he rose in his stirrups, and made a most graceful obeisance to his King.

"What wouldst thou with us, Courtenay?" said Richard, with a smile playing about his mouth.

"My liege," replied Courtenay, bowing again with peculiar grace, "I have to ask a boon of your royal favour."

"Speak then, we give thee license," replied the King.

"So please your majesty, I do conceive myself grossly insulted by a Scottish knight; in such wise indeed, that the blood of one of us must wash out the stain. May we then have thy royal leave to fight before thee even now, to the outrance?"

"Name the Scottish knight of whom thou dost so complain," said the King, with difficulty composing his features; "thou hast our full license to give him thy darreigne."

"'Tis he who now rideth this way," replied Courtenay, "Sir William de Dalzel."

"Ha! what wouldst thou with me, most puissant Sir Piers?" said Dalzel, who just then returned from riding slowly along the whole length of the bridge, with his vizor up, a grave face, and a burlesque attitude, so as to show his pie off to the greatest advantage, bringing a roar of laughter along with him from the balconies and open lattices on both sides of the way, and who now approached Courtenay with a bow so ridiculous, that it entirely upset the small portion of gravity that the young King was blessed with; "what wouldst thou with me, I say, most potent paragon of knighthood?"

"I would that thou shouldst redeem thy pledge," replied Courtenay, with very unusual brevity.

"What, then, Sir Piers," replied Dalzel, "must it then be pie against popinjay? Nay, cry your mercy, I forgot. Thy bird, I do believe, is called a falcon, though, by St Luke, an 'twere not for the legend, few, I wis, would take it for aught but an owl, being that it is of portraiture so villainous."

"By the blessed St Erkenwold, but thy bantering doth pass 'all bearing," cried Courtenay impatiently, and perhaps more nettled at this attack on the merits of his embroidery than he had been with anything that had yet passed. "Depardieux, my falcon was the admiration of the Westminster feast. By the holy St Paul, it was the work of the most eminent artists the metropolis can boast."

"Perdie, I am right glad to hear thy character of them," replied Dalzel, "for my pie here is by the same hands; nay, and now I look at it again, 'tis most marvellously fashioned. By the Rood, but it pecks an 'twere alive."

"Thou hast contrived to turn all eyes upon me by thy clownish mockery," cried Courtenay, getting still more angry, as the laugh rose higher at every word uttered by his adversary.

"Nay, then," replied Dalzel, with affected gravity, "methinks thou shouldst give me good store of thanks, Sir Knight, for having brought

so many bright and so many brave eyes to look upon the high perfections of thee and thy buzzard."

"My liege," replied Courtenay, no longer able to stand the laugh that ran around from window to window at his expense, "am I to have thy royal license?"

"Go, then, without farther let," said the King; "let the heralds of the lists proclaim the challenge."

The usual ceremonies were now gone through, and Sir Piers Courtenay rode off to the barrier lately tenanted by the Lord Welles. Dalzel sat looking after him for some seconds until he was master of his attitude, and then turning his horse, cantered off to his own barrier, so perfectly caricaturing the proud and indignant seat of the raging Courtenay, that he carried a peal of laughter along with him. But the universal merriment was much increased when the banner of the falcon was contrasted with that of the pie, which was raised in opposition to it. It was silenced, however, by the trumpets of warning, that now brayed loudly from either end of the bridge.

A second and a third time they sounded, and Courtenay flew against his opponent with a fury equal to the rage he felt. Even the serious na-

ture of the combat could not tame the waggery of the roguish Dalzel, who, though he failed not to give due attention to the manner in which he bore his shield, as well as to the firmness of his seat, rode his career in a manner so ludicrous, as altogether to overcome that solemn silence of expectation that generally awaited the issue of a combat where death might ensue. The spectators, indeed, were made to forget the probability of such a consequence, and Courtenay's ears continued to be mortified by the loud laugh, which, though it followed his adversary, fell with all its blistering effect upon him. Though much disconcerted, the English knight bore his lance's point bravely and truly against Dalzel's helmet; but the cunning Scot had left it unlaced, so that it gave way as it was touched, and fell back on his shoulders without his feeling the shock; whilst his own lance passed high over the head of his antagonist.

This appeared to be the result of accident, and they prepared to run again. The signal was given, the encounter came, Dalzel's helmet gave way a second time, whilst he with great adroitness pierced the silken wreath supporting the falcon that soared over Courtenay's casque, and bore it off in triumph.

"Ha!" exclaimed he, "by St Andrew, but

I have the popinjay!" And so saying, he waited not for farther talk, but rode off along the bridge with pompous air, and returned, bearing it on high, to the great mortification of Courtenay, and the no small amusement of the spectators.

Courtenay's ire was now excited to the utmost. The trumpet sounded for the third career, and he ran at Dalzel with the fullest determination to unhorse him; but again the treacherous helmet defeated him, whilst he received the point of his adversary's lance so rudely on the bars of the vizor, that they gave way before it.

"Come hither, come hither quickly," cried Courtenay to his esquire. "By the blessed St George, I have suffered most fatal damage, the which the clownish life of that caitiff Scot would but poorly compensate."

All eyes were now turned towards him; and his esquire having released him from his helmet, showed his mouth bleeding so profusely, that those who were near him began seriously to fear that he had really suffered some fatal injury.

"As I am a true knight, my liege, I shall never lift my head again," said Courtenay. "I have lost the most precious ornaments of my

face, two pearls from my upper jaw;—see, here they are," said he, holding them out, "fresh, oriental, and shaped by nature with an elegance so surprisingly and scrupulously accurate, that they were the admiration of all who saw them. What shall I do without them?"

"Nay, in truth, thou must e'en make war on thy food with the wings of thine army, instead of nibbling at it with the centre, as I did remark thou wert wont to do," said Sir William Dalzel, looking over his shoulder.

"Dost thou sit there, my liege, to see one of thy native knights made a mock of? Had not the traitor's helmet been left unclosed, by the holy shrine of St Erkenwold, but he should have bit the dust ere now. I demand justice."

"Nay, of a truth I did greatly err, most valiant sir," said Sir William Dalzel, with mock penitence. "It was that hawk-shaped nese of thine that my pie would have pyked at."

"Give me but one course all fair, and thou mayst pick as it may please thee," replied Courtenay.

"Nay, I am willing to pleasure thee with six courses, if thou wouldst have them, good Sir Knight of the Howlet," replied Dalzel: "but then, mark me, it must be on equal terms. Hi-

therto thou hast fought me with a secret vantage on thy side."

"Vantage!" cried Courtenay with indignation; "nay, methinks the vantage hath been all thine own, Sir Scot."

"In truth, it must be owned I have had the best of it, Sir Englishman," said Dalzel with a sarcastic leer; "nathless, 'tis thou who hast had the secret vantage."

"Let us be judged then by the royal Richard," said Courtenay.

"Agreed," said Dalzel. "But let each of us first pledge in the royal hands two hundred pieces of gold, to be incontinently forfaulted by him who shall be found to have borne the secret vantage."

"Agreed," cried Courtenay confidently.

A murmur of highly-excited curiosity now ran along the lists, and the knights dispatched their esquires for the money. Dalzel gave a private hint to his as he went. In a short time the two esquires returned, each carrying a purse on a pole, both of which were put up in the balcony where the King sat. But what surprised every one, was the appearance of a farrier, who followed Dalzel's squire, bearing a burning brand in his hand.

"And now," said Dalzel aloud, "I do bold-

ly accuse Sir Piers Courtenay, the Knight of the How——, nay, he of the Falcon, I mean, of having fought against me with two eyes, whilst one of mine was scooped out at Otterbourne, doubtless by one of the hot-spurring sons of Northumberland's Earl. I do therefore claim his forfaulted purse. But as I do fully admit the bravery of the said Sir Piers, the goodness of whose metal is sufficiently apparent, though it be besprent with so much vain tinsel, I am willing to do farther battle with him, yea, for as many as six courses, or sixty times six, if he be so inclined—but this on condition that he doth resign that unfair vantage the which he hath hitherto had of me, and cheerfully submit to have one of his eyes extinguished by the brand of this sooty operator."

"Sir Piers Courtenay," said Richard, laughing heartily at a joke so well suited to the times, and which had renewed the convulsions of laughter so severely felt by Dalzel's antagonist, "art thou prepared to agree to this so reasonable proposal?"

But Sir Piers Courtenay was so chagrined that he wanted words. He hung his head, and was silent.

"Then must we of needscost forbid all farther duel, and forthwith decide incontinently

against thee. The purses are thine, Sir William de Dalzel, for, sooth to say, thou hast well earned them by thy merry wit."

"Nay, then, Sir Piers Courtenay," said Dalzel, riding up to his opponent, "let not this waggery of mine cause me to tyne thy good will. Trust me, I will have none of thy money; but if thou art disposed to confess that thou hast now no longer that contempt for Scottish knights, the which thou hast been hitherto so much inclined to manifest, let it be laid out in some merry masquing party of entertainment, the which shall be thine only penance. When all else, from the Royal Richard downwards, have been so hospitable, why should we have to complain of the despisal of one English knight? Let us shake hands then, I pray thee."

"Sir William de Dalzel, though thou hast worked me a grievous loss, the which can never be made good," replied Courtenay, laying his hand on his mouth, "verily I do bear thee no unchristian ill-will; and sith that his Majesty hath absolved us of our duel, I do hereby cheerfully give thee the right hand of good-fellowship."

"'Tis well," said Dalzel. "Instead of fighting thee, I will strive with thee in that for the

which neither eyes nor teeth may be much needed. I will dance a bargaret with thee, yea, or a fandango, if that may please thee better, and there I shall ask for no favour."

CHAPTER IX.

After the spectacle was over, and whilst the homeward procession was forming, Sir Patrick Hepborne was surprised by the wave of a fair hand, accompanied by a smiling bow of acknowledgment, from a very beautiful woman in one of the balconies close to that of the King. From the richness of her attire, and the place that had been allotted to her, she was evidently a lady of some consequence. He returned the compliment, but whilst he did so, he felt unconscious of having ever spoken to her, although, upon re-perusing her face, he remembered her as one whom he had seen at the King's banquets, where he had observed that she was particularly noticed by the Sovereign. Turning to Sir Miles Stapleton, who stood by him, he besought him to tell her name.

"What," exclaimed Sir Miles in reply, "hast thou been at our English court for so many days, Sir Patrick, and yet knowest thou

not the Lady de Vere? Depardieux, it doth much surprise me that she hath not sooner sought thine acquaintance, for, by the Rood, she is a merry madam, and fond of variety. She hath been married but a short space, yet she already changeth her lovers as she doth her fancy robes."

"Is it possible?" cried Hepborne, in astonishment.

"Possible, Sir Patrick!" returned the English knight; "perdie, I am surprised at thy seeming wonder. Are Scottish ladies then so constant to their lords, that thou should'st think this fickleness so great a marvel in the Lady de Vere? She hath been for some time an especial favourite of Majesty; that is, I would have thee to understand me, in friendship, not par amours, though there be evil tongues that do say as much."

"Indeed!" cried Hepborne.

"Yea, they scruple not to say so," continued Sir Miles; "but I, who better know the King, do verily believe that, albeit he is much given to idle dalliance with these free ladies of this licentious court, there be but little else to accuse him of. Thou needest have no fear, therefore, Sir Patrick, that the dread of Majesty will interfere with thy happiness, if it be her will to receive

thee as a lover; so I wish thee joy of thy conquest. Trust me, I do more envy thee than I do the brave conqueror of the Lord Welles, much glory as he hath gained."

Sir Patrick turned away, at once confounded and disgusted. What, the Lady Eleanore de Selby, of whose excellence he had heard so much, the friend of the Lady Beatrice—was it possible that the contamination of a court could have already rendered her a person of character so loose? He was shocked at the thought. He turned again to watch her motions, when he observed the King himself advance towards her, as she was preparing to get into her saddle, and a private conversation pass between them, that drew the eyes of all the courtiers upon them; but Sir Patrick being called away to join the Scottish party, lost the opportunity of observing the conclusion of their conference.

Whilst the procession was dispersing in the court-yard of the Tower, the Lady de Vere entered, riding on a piebald palfrey, richly caparisoned. She was surrounded by a group of gay chevaliers, with whom she was talking and laughing loudly; but she no sooner espied Hepborne than she broke from among them, and advanced to meet him.

"Sir Patrick Hepborne," said she, smiling, "it erketh me that mine evil fortune hath hitherto yielded me no better than public opportunity to know him, who by consent of all is acknowledged to be the flower of Scottish chivalry. Trust me, my private apartments shall be ever open to so peerless a knight."

"Nay, lady," replied Sir Patrick, "the title thou hast been pleased to bestow on me, belongeth not to me, but to Sir David Lindsay, and Sir William Dalzel, who have this day so nobly supported the honour of Scotland."

"They are brave knights, 'tis true," replied the lady; "yet be there other qualifications in knighthood than mere brute strength or brute courage. That thou hast enow of both of these to the full as well as they, we who have heard of Otterbourne do well know. But in the graces of knightly deportment, there be few who admit them to be thine equal; and of that few, I do confess myself not to be one."

Hepborne bowed; but disgusted alike with her freedom and flattery, he gave token of approval neither by manner nor words.

"These are my apartments, Sir Knight," continued the lady, pointing to a range of windows in a wing of the palace. "If thou canst quit the banquet, to spend some merry hours with

me this evening, trust me, thou shalt meet with no cold reception from the Lady de Vere."

This invitation was seasoned by some warm glances, that spoke even more than her words; but Sir Patrick received both the one and the other with a silent and formal obeisance. The lady turned towards a flight of steps, and being assisted to dismount by an esquire, she tripped up stairs and along a covered terrace. A door opened at its farther extremity, and a lady appeared for a moment. It was the Lady Beatrice: he could not be mistaken: her image was now too deeply engraven on his heart. The blood bounded for a moment within his bosom, rushed through each artery with the heat and velocity of lightning, and then, as the thought of the Lady de Vere's character arose within his mind, it returned cold as ice to its fountain-head, and froze up every warm feeling there. He felt faint, and his head grew giddy. He looked towards the door where the two ladies were saluting each other with every mark of kindness, and his eyes grew dim as they vanished within the entrance.

Almost unconscious of what he was doing, Sir Patrick turned his horse to go to his lodging. As he recovered from the stunning effect of the spectacle he had beheld, his mind began

to be agonized by the most distressing thoughts. It was impossible that the Lady Beatrice, whom he believed to be so pure, could be the willing guest of so vile a woman, knowing her to be such. Yet though such was his impression, he knew not well what to think. It was most strange that the Lady de Vere should have thus urged him to visit her while Beatrice was with her; unless, indeed, the latter were privy to it, and that it was on her account. But be this as it might, he liked not the complexion of matters; and, in a state of great perplexity and unhappiness, he reached the wine-merchant's, where, having given his horse to a groom, he slowly sought his chamber, unwillingly to prepare for the banquet.

In going along the passage which led to his apartments, thinking of what so much occupied him, he, in a fit of absence, opened a door, believing it to be his own; and, to his great surprise, he found himself in a room, where some dozen or twenty persons were seated at a long table, on which lay some papers. His host was there among the rest, and the appearance of the knight threw the whole party into dismay and confusion. Hepborne drew back with an apology, and hastily shut the door; but he had hardly reached his own, when he heard the steps of his host coming hurrying after him.

"Sir Knight," said Master Ratcliffe, "'twas but some of those with whom I have had money dealings, come to settle interest with me."

As Hepborne looked in his face, he was surprised to notice that it had exchanged its generous ruby red for a deadly paleness; the wine-merchant was evidently disturbed; but neither this observation, nor the confusion he had occasioned among the party whom he had seen surrounding the table, could then find room in his mind for a moment's thought. He therefore hastily explained that the interruption had been quite accidental on his part, and the wine-merchant left him apparently satisfied. It will be easily believed that Sir Patrick Hepborne was but ill attuned for the revelry of the royal banquet. He sat silent and abstracted, ruminating on the monstrous and afflicting conjunction he had that day witnessed, and perplexing himself with inventing explanations of the cruel doubts that were perpetually arising in his mind. The King broke up the feast at an earlier hour than usual, and Sir Patrick, glad to escape from the crowd, stole away by himself.

As he was leaving the palace, he turned his eyes towards the casements of the Lady de Vere. They were eminently conspicuous, for they were open, and lighted up with great brilliancy, while

the sound of the harp came from them. He thought of the invitation he had received, and hung about for some time, weighing circumstances, and hesitating whether he should immediately avail himself of it, that he might ascertain the truth, or whether he should, in the first place, endeavour to gather it by some other means. Passion argued for the first, as the most decided step, and prudence urged the second, as the wisest plan; but whilst he was tossed between them, he was gradually drawn towards the windows by the unseen magnet within. As he got nearer, he ascertained that it was a man's voice that sung the melody and words, to which the instrument was an accompaniment; and by the time he reached the bottom of the flight of steps, he could catch the remaining verses of a ballad, part of which had been already sung. They were nearly as follows:—

"And wilt thou break thy faith with me,
And dare our vows to rend?"
"Hence!" cried the angry sire; "with thee
My Eda ne'er shall wend.

"Her name doth prouder match demand;
Lord Henry comes to-night;
He comes to take her promised hand,
And claim a husband's right.

"Then hence!"—The knight, in woful guise,
Turn'd from the perjured gate;
The maiden heard her lover's sighs,
All weeping where she sate.

"Now up and run, my bonny page,
  Fly with the falcon's wing,
Fly swiftly to Sir Armitage,
  And give to him this ring.

"And tell him, when the rippling ford
  Shall catch the moonbeam's light,
I'll leave the hated bridal board,
  To meet him there to-night."

The boy he found Sir Armitage
  In greenwood all so sad;
But when he spied his lady's page,
  His weeping eyne grew glad.

And up leap'd he for very joy,
  And kiss'd his lady's ring,
And much he praised the bonny boy,
  Who did such message bring.

"I'll meet my lady by the stream,
  So, boy, now hie thee home;
I'll meet her when the moon's broad beam
  Comes dancing o'er the foam."

And now to grace the wedding-feast
  The demoiselles prepare;
There were the bridegroom, sire, and priest,
  But Eda was not there.

She left her tyrant father's tower,
  To seek her own true knight;
She met him at the trysted hour,
  Prepared to aid her flight.

"Sir Armitage, with thee I'll ride
  Through flood, o'er fell so steep;
Though destined for another's bride,
  My vow to thee I'll keep."—

"Oh bless thee, bless thee, lady mine,
  That true thy heart doth prove;
Before yon moon hath ceased to shine,
  The priest shall bless our love.

He raised her on his gallant steed,
  And sprang him to his selle ;
" Keep, keep thy seat, my love, with heed,
  And grasp my baldrick well."

Beneath the moon the wavelets flash'd,
  Struck by the courser's heel,
As through the ford he boldly dash'd,
  Spurr'd by the pointed steel.

High up his sides the surges rose,
  And wash'd the blood away ;
They laved fair Eda's bridle-clothes,
  And fill'd her with dismay.

" Alas, the stream is strong," she cried
  " Fear not, my love," said he ;
" 'Tis here the waters deepest glide,
  Anon we shall be free."

Behind them rung a wild alarm,
  And torches gleam'd on high,
Forth from the Castle came a swarm,
  With yells that rent the sky.

Again the knight his iron heel
  Dash'd in his courser's side.
He plunged—his powerful limbs did reel—
  He yielded to the tide.

Down went both mailed horse and knight ;
  The maid was borne away,
And flash'd the moonbeam's silver light
  Amid the sparkling spray.

His daughter's shriek the father heard,
  Far on the moonlight wave ;
A moment Eda's form appear'd,
  Then sunk in watery grave.

Peace never blest the sire again,
  He curst ambitious pride,
That made him hold his promise vain,
  And sacred oaths deride.

Still in his eye his sinking child,
  Her shriek still in his ear,
Reft of his mind, he wanders wild
  Midst rocks and forests drear.

But where that cross in yonder shade
  Oft bends the pilgrim's knee,
There sleep the gentle knight and maid
  Beneath their trysting-tree.

When the musician had finished, Sir Patrick Hepborne still continued to loiter with his arm on the balustrade of the stair, when the door opened, and he heard a feeble step on the terrace above. He looked upwards, and the light of a lamp that was burning in a niche fell on the aged countenance of a man who was descending. It was Adam of Gordon.

"Adam of Gordon!" exclaimed Sir Patrick.

"And who is he, I pray, who doth know Adam of Gordon so far from home?" demanded the minstrel. "Ah, Sir Patrick Hepborne; holy St Cuthbert, I do rejoice to see thee. Trust me, the ready help thou didst yield me at Forres hath not been forgotten; though thou didst sorely mar my verses by thine interruption. Full many sithes have I tried to awaken that noble subject, but the witchery of inspiration is past, and——"

"But how camest thou here?" demanded Hepborne, impatiently interrupting him.

"Sir Knight, I came hither with a lady from the Borders," said Adam hesitatingly; "a lady that——"

"Nay, speak not so mystically, old man," replied Hepborne; "I am already well aware of the story of the Lady Beatrice, and heartily do I curse mine own folly for permitting jealousy so to hoodwink mine eyes as to make me run blindly away from mine own happiness. I already guess that it was she whom thou didst accompany hither, and I know that she is now an inmate of those apartments, with the Lady de Vere, the daughter of the late Sir Walter de Selby."

"Nay, nay, so far thou art wrong, Sir Knight," replied the minstrel. "She to whom these apartments do belong is not the daughter of Sir Walter de Selby. True it is, indeed, that when the Lady Eleanore did leave Norham Castle, she did call the companion of her flight by the name of Sir Hans de Vere, a Zealand knight, kinsman to the Duke of Ireland; but some strange mystery doth yet hang over this affair, for he who doth own these gay lodgings, and who is the husband of this gay madam, is the identical Sir Hans de Vere I have just described, and yet he knoweth nought of the Lady Eleanore de Selby."

"Thy speech is one continued riddle, good Adam," said Hepborne; "canst thou not explain to me?"

"Nay, of a truth, Sir Knight, thou dost know as much as I do," said the minstrel. "What hath become of the Lady Eleanore de Selby, no one can tell. If he that she married be indeed a De Vere, he is at least no kin to the Duke of Ireland, as he or she would have had us to believe. There have been De Veres enow about the English Court since this King Richard began his reign, albeit that the day may be gone by with many of them, sith that their chief, the Duke of Ireland, hath been forced to flee into Zealand, where his race had its origin. But of all the De Veres, none doth answer the description of him whom the Lady Beatrice and I did see carry off the Lady Eleanore de Selby from Norham."

"Strange, most strange," said Sir Patrick Hepborne; "but knowest thou aught of this Lady de Vere? Men's tongues do talk but lightly of her."

"Nay, in good truth, I have begun to entertain strange notions of her myself," replied Adam. "By'r Lady, she would have had me sing some virelays to-night that were light and warm enow, I promise thee, had I not feigned

that I knew them not; and, by my troth, she spared not to chide me for my sober minstrelsy, the which she did tauntingly compare to the chanting of monks. My lady, quoth I, consider I am but a rude Border——"

"But say, old man," cried Hepborne, impatiently interrupting him, "how did the Lady Beatrice seek shelter with such a woman? Quick, tell me, I beseech thee, for I must hasten to rescue the pure and spotless dove from the clutch of this foul howlet."

"In the name of the Virgin, then, let us lose no time in thinking how it may best be done," said Adam of Gordon earnestly; "St Andrew be praised that thou, Sir Knight, art so willing to become the protector of an angel, who—— Yet I dare not say how much thou art beloved. But, hush! we may be overheard here in the open air. Let us retreat to my garret yonder, where I will tell thee all I can, and then we may, with secrecy and expedition, concert what steps thou hadst best take."

Hepborne readily followed the minstrel to his small chamber, and there he learned the following particulars.

The Lady Beatrice had no sooner recovered from the swoon into which she had been thrown by the appearance of the Franciscan at Sir

Walter de Selby's funeral, than she sent for the minstrel, of whose attachment and fidelity she had already had many a proof, and imparted to him her design of quitting Norham Castle immediately. Without communicating her intention to any one else, she mounted that milk-white palfrey which had been the gift of Hepborne, and travelled with all speed to Newcastle, where she sought shelter in the house of a widowed sister of Sir Walter de Selby. There she lived for a short time in retirement, until at last she adopted the resolution of visiting London, in search of her friend the Lady Eleanore, whom she believed to be now the Lady de Vere, that she might communicate to her the death of her father, if she had not already heard of that event, and entreat from her a continuance of that protection which he had so long afforded her. She and the minstrel, therefore, went on board a ship sailing for the Thames; but having been tossed about by contrary winds, and even compelled to seek safety more than once in harbours by the way, they had only arrived in the metropolis three days before that of which we are now speaking.

The minstrel was immediately employed by the Lady Beatrice to make inquiry for the Lady

de Vere, and he was readily directed to the lodgings of the lady of that name in the Tower. But he was no sooner introduced into her presence, and that of her husband, Sir Hans de Vere, than he discovered that there was some strange mistake. To exculpate himself for his seeming intrusion on a knight and lady to whom he was an utter stranger, he explained the cause of his coming, and told whom he sought for, when, to his great dismay, he learned that no such persons as those he described were known about the Court. Filled with chagrin, he returned to the Lady Beatrice, whose vexation may be more easily conceived than described. She was a stranger in London, in a wretched hostel, without a friend but old Adam to advise her, and severed for ever, as she feared, from the only human being on whom she could say that she had the least claim for protection. Despair came upon her, and hiding her face in her hands, she gave full way to her grief.

Whilst she sat in this wretched situation, in which Adam in vain exerted himself to comfort her, a page arrived, with a kind message from Sir Hans and Lady de Vere, in which they offered her their house as a home, until she should have time to determine as to her future conduct. So friendly, so seasonable a proposal,

was not to be rejected in her circumstances, even coming as it did from strangers, and the Lady Beatrice gladly became the guest of the Lady de Vere.

So far went the minstrel's knowledge; but leaving Sir Patrick to question him as he pleases, we shall ourselves more deeply investigate the circumstances, as well as the secret springs of action which produced this event.—It happened that just after the minstrel's interview with the Lady de Vere, King Richard came to idle an hour with her, as he was often wont to do, to gather the gossip of the Court. The lady told him what had passed, and the Monarch joined with her in the laugh it occasioned. The Lady de Vere had extracted enough of Beatrice's history from the minstrel to be able to answer the King's questions.

"And who may this Beatrice be?" demanded Richard.

"A damsel, I believe, whom old De Selby picked up at the door of a Scottish peasant, and whom he fancied to educate as a companion to his daughter Eleanore," replied Lady de Vere; "doubtless, now that he is dead, she seeks to hang herself about the neck of the heiress of her patron."

"And sith that she hath so come, might we

not find some other neck for her to hang about?" said the King, laughing: "Pr'ythee, send for her hither; we should be well contented to see this stray bird."

The Lady de Vere well knew her advantage in humouring all the wild fancies that entered the King's head, and accordingly gave immediate obedience to his wishes, by sending to Beatrice the message we have already noticed. Fatigued to death by her voyage, Beatrice had no sooner complied with the invitation she had received, than she was compelled to retire to the apartment the Lady de Vere had prepared for her; and she continued so long indisposed, that she was unable to be present at the tilting.

Towards the evening of that day, however, she was so far recovered as to be able to quit her room; and accordingly, when the procession returned from London Bridge, she hastened to pour out her gratitude to the Lady de Vere, for the hospitable reception she had given her.

Sir Hans went to the King's banquet, but his lady remained with Beatrice; and the minstrel was sent for to amuse them with his ballads. There was something free and bold in the manner of the Lady de Vere, that was by no means agreeable to Beatrice: but believing

that there was nothing worse in it than an unfortunate manner, she endeavoured to reconcile herself to it, in one who had shown her so much apparent friendship.

They were seated in a luxuriously-furnished apartment, hung with tapestry of the richest hues, and lighted up by silver lamps, when the door opened, and Sir Hans de Vere entered, ushering in a young man, whom he introduced as the Earl of Westminster. The Lady de Vere smiled on the young nobleman, and Beatrice, though she had never heard of such a title, was aware that new lords were created so frequently, that there was little wonder she should be ignorant of it. The young Earl, who was very handsome, seemed to be on habits of great intimacy with Sir Hans de Vere and his lady. He seated himself by the Lady Beatrice, and began to trifle pleasantly with her, mixing up a thousand courtly compliments with the agreeable nothings that he uttered. Spiced wine and sweetmeats were handed round, and soon afterwards a small, but very tasteful and exquisitely cooked, supper appeared, with wines of the richest flavour. The Lady Beatrice ate little, and refused to touch wine. The night wore apace. The young Earl of Westminster became more and more earnest

in his endeavours to make himself agreeable to Beatrice, who began to find considerable amusement in his conversation, and insensibly permitted him to absorb her whole attention. Suddenly he began, in a sort of half-serious manner, to address her in a strain of tenderness that by no means pleased her. She prepared to shift her place; but what was her astonishment, when, on looking up, she saw that she and the young Earl were alone. Sir Hans de Vere and his lady had stolen unnoticed from the apartment. Beatrice started up to follow them.

"Nay, stay to hear me, lovely Beatrice," cried the Earl, endeavouring to detain her.

"Unhand me, my lord," cried she boldly, and at the same time tearing herself from him.

"Hear me, only hear me," cried the Earl, springing to the door, so as to cut off her retreat.

This action still more alarmed her. She screamed aloud for help, and flying to the casement, threw it open; but the Earl dragged her from it by gentle force, and having shut it, he was vainly endeavouring to compose her, when the chamber-door was burst open by a furious kick, and Sir Patrick Hepborne appeared, with his drawn sword in his hand.

"King Richard!" cried the knight, starting

back with astonishment: "Doth England's King so far forget the duty of the high office he doth hold, as to become the destroyer, instead of the protector, of innocence? Yet, by St Andrew, wert thou fifty times a king, thou shouldst answer to me for thine insult to that lady. Defend thyself."

The cool presence of mind exhibited by Richard, whilst yet a stripling, on the memorable occasion of Wat Tyler being struck down by Walworth the Lord Mayor, showed that he was not constitutionally deficient in courage; but in this, as in everything else, he was wavering and uncertain, and no one was more liable than he to yield to sudden panic. Seeing Hepborne about to spring on him, he darted into an inner room, the door of which stood ajar.

"Sir Patrick Hepborne!" cried the Lady Beatrice, her lovely face flushing with the mingled emotions of surprise, joy, gratitude, and love.

"Yes," cried the knight, throwing himself on one knee before her, "yes, Lady Beatrice, he who may now dare to call himself thine own faithful and true knight—he who hath now had his eyes cleared from the errors which blinded him—he who, whilst deeply smitten by those

matchless charms, believed that in his adoration of them he was worshipping the Lady Eleanore de Selby—he who thus believing himself to be deceived and rejected, did yet continue to nourish the pure and enduring flame in his bosom after all hope had fled, and who now feels it glow with tenfold warmth, sith that hope's gentle gales have again sprung up to fan it—he who will——But whither is my passion leading me?" cried he, starting up, and taking Beatrice's hand; "this is no time for indulging myself in such a theme, dear as it may be to me. Lady, thou art betrayed. This is no fit place of sojournance for spotless virtue such as thine. The false Lady de Vere is one who doth foully minister to the King's pleasures. Lose not a moment, I beseech you. I have seen Adam of Gordon, who waits for us without. Fly then," cried he, leading her towards the door, "fly with me; I will be thy protector. Let us haste from the impure den of this wicked woman, who would have——"

Sir Patrick threw open the door as he pronounced these words, and in an instant he was prostrated on the floor by the blow of a halbert.

"Seize him and drag him to a dungeon," cried the Lady de Vere, with eyes flashing like

those of an enraged tigress; "I accuse him of a treasonable attack on the sacred person of the King of England. He shall die the death of a traitor."—The guards obeyed her, and lifting up the inanimate body of the knight, bore him away.

"So," cried the fury, "so perish those who shall dare to insult the love of the Lady de Vere; and as for thee, minion," said she, turning round, "thou art a prisoner there during my pleasure." And saying so, she pushed Beatrice into the room, and locked and bolted the door on the wretched damsel, who fell from her violence, and instantly swooned away.

When the Lady Beatrice recovered, and began to recollect what had passed, she arose in a tremor, and tottering to a seat, rested herself for some moments, throwing her eyes fearfully around the apartment. Everything in it remained as it was. No one seemed to have entered since. The lamps had begun to burn so faintly, that they appeared to tell of the approach of midnight, and this idea was strengthened by the silence that prevailed everywhere, both without and within the palace. She tried the bolts of the door, but, to her great horror, she found them fast. A faint hope of escape arose, when she remembered that the King had

disappeared by the inner apartment, whence there might be a passage leading to other chambers. She snatched up an expiring hand-lamp, and hastened to explore it. But there was no visible mode of exit from the room, and she now became convinced that the King must have returned through the apartment whilst she lay insensible, and that some one had liberated him from without. The recollection of the cruel wound, which she almost feared might have been Sir Patrick's death-blow, together with the certainty of his captivity, and the probable issue of it, now filled her mind with horror; and this, added to the perplexity of her present situation, so overcame her, that she sat down and wept bitterly.

The lamps now one after another expired, until she was left in total darkness. She groped her way into the inner apartment, and having fastened the door within, threw herself upon the couch, and abandoned herself to all her wretchedness.

Whilst the Lady Beatrice was lying in this distressing situation, she was startled by a noise. Suddenly a glare of light flashed upon her eyes; she rubbed them, and looked towards the spot whence it proceeded. A man in a friar's habit stood near the wall; he held a lamp high, that

its light might the better fill the room. Immediately behind him was an opening in the tapestry, the folds of which being held aside by a hand and arm, admitted the entrance of another shaven-crowned head. To the terror of the Lady Beatrice, she recognised in this second monk the piercing eyes and powerful features of the very Franciscan, whose dagger had so alarmed her at Lochyndorbe, and the sight of whom had so affected her at Sir Walter de Selby's funeral. She attempted to scream, but fear so overcame her, that, like one who labours under a night-mare, her lips moved, but her tongue refused to do its office, and she lay with her eyes wide open, staring on the object of her dread, in mute expectation of immediate murder.

"Is she there, Friar Rushak?" said he whom we have known by the name of the Franciscan.

"She is here," said the first monk, who bore the lamp; "all is quiet too—thou mayest safely enter."

The Franciscan who followed now stepped into the apartment, and came stealing forward with soft barefooted tread.

"Give me the light, Friar Rushak, that there may be no mistake," said he, taking the lamp from his companion.

The blood grew chill in the Lady Beatrice's veins as the Franciscan approached the couch where she lay. He held the lamp so as to throw its light strongly upon her face.

"It is she indeed," said he, in a muttering voice, while his features were lighted up by a grim smile of satisfaction, which gradually faded away, leaving a severe expression in his lightning eye.

"She trembles," said Friar Rushak, advancing towards the couch with a terrible look; "conscious of her own depravity, she is guilt-stricken."

"Ay, she may well be guilt-stricken," said the Franciscan.

"Alas! of what am I accused, mysterious man?" cried the Lady Beatrice, clasping her hands together, and throwing herself on her knees before them. "Murder me not—murder me not.—Let not the holy garments you wear be stained with the blood of innocence."

"Innocence!" cried Friar Rushak, "talk not thou of innocence!—Why art thou in these apartments if thou be'st innocent?"

"So help me the pure and immaculate Virgin, I am not here by mine own consent," said the unhappy lady. "Murder me not without inquiry—I am a prisoner here—I was eager to

escape—I should have escaped with Sir Patrick Hepborne, had not——"

"Sir Patrick Hepborne," said the Franciscan, with a ferocious look—"Ay, so!—The curse of St Francis be upon him!"

"Nay, nay, curse him not—oh curse him not!" cried Beatrice, embracing the Franciscan's knees. "Murder me if thou wilt, but oh curse not him, who, at peril of his noble life, would have rescued me from these hated walls."

"Yea, again I do say may he be accursed," cried the Franciscan, with increased energy and ferocity of aspect. "Full well do we know thy love for this infamous knight—full well do we know why he would have liberated thee."

"But to find thee here as a toil spread by the devil to catch the tottering virtue of King Richard!" cried Friar Rushak.

"Yea," said the Franciscan, striking his forehead with the semblance of intense inward feeling, "to find thee a monster so utterly depraved, is indeed even more than my worst suspicions."

"What could'st thou hope, minion?" said Friar Rushak, sternly—"what could'st thou hope from fixing thine impure affections on the royal Richard?"

"Blessed Virgin," cried the tortured Beatrice, clasping her hands and throwing her eyes solemnly upwards, "holy Mother of God, thou who art truth itself, and who canst well search out the truth in others, if I do speak aught else than truth now, let thy just indignation strike me down an inanimate corpse. I am here as an innocent victim to the treachery of the Lady de Vere. She it was who inveigled me into these apartments by pretended friendship, that she might make a sacrifice of me. I knew not even the person of King Richard; and had it not been for Sir Patrick Hepborne, who so bravely rescued me from his hands——"

"Um," said Friar Rushak, somewhat moved by what she had uttered; "thine appeal is solemn, and it must be confessed that the evidence of those who did accuse thee of plotting against the King's heart, is indeed but questionable.—It may be—But, be it as it may, it mattereth not, for thou shalt soon be put beyond the reach of weaving snares for Richard. Yet shall we try thee anon, for thou shalt see the King, and if by word or look thou dost betray thyself, this dagger shall search thy heart, yea, even in the presence of Richard himself."

"King Richard!" cried Beatrice, with dis-

traction in her looks. "Take me not before the King; let me not again behold the King.—Where have they carried Sir Patrick Hepborne? In charity let me fly to him; he may now want that aid which I am bound to yield him."

"Nay, thou shalt never see him more," said the Franciscan bitterly.

"Oh, say not so, say not so—tell me not that he is dead," cried the Lady Beatrice, forgetting everything else in her apprehension for Sir Patrick; "oh, if a spark of charity burns within your bosoms, let me hasten to him. I saw him bleeding, and on the ground—I heard him cruelly condemned to a dungeon—oh, let me be the companion of his captivity—let me watch by his pillow—let me soothe his sorrows—let me be his physician. If my warm life's-blood were a healing balm, this gushing heart would yield it all for his minutest wound." Her feelings overcame her, and she fell back, half fainting, on the floor.

"Raise her head," said Friar Rushak to the Franciscan, who was bending over her with some anxiety; and he applied to her nostrils a small golden box, containing some refreshing odour, which speedily began to revive her.

"Alas!" said the Franciscan, "however in-

nocently she may be here, as affects the King, her abandoned love for her seducer hath been too clearly confessed."

"She reviveth," said Friar Rushak; "raise her to her feet. And now let us hasten, brother; the moments fly fast, and we have yet to effect our perilous passage through the——"

"Is there no other way?" demanded the Franciscan.

"None," replied the Friar Rushak; "and if the King should——"

"The King!" repeated Beatrice, with a thrill of dread.

"Ay, lady, the King," replied the Friar Rushak, with a strong emphasis and a desperate expression; "but thou must wear this disguise, to conceal thee," continued he, opening out a bundle containing a Franciscan's habit. "Draw the cowl over thy head and face; follow me with caution; and whatever thou may'st see, utter no word, or give no sign, else—Nay, let not thy breath be heard, or—Come on."

The Friar Rushak now led the way with the lamp, and the Lady Beatrice, shaking from a dread that even her loose disguise could not conceal, stepped after him through a spring-door behind the tapestry, that led into a passage in the centre of the wall. The Franciscan followed,

and shut the door behind him. The passage was so narrow, that one person only could advance at a time. It was strangely crooked also, frequently bending at right angles, so as to defy all Beatrice's speculation as to where they might be leading her. A dead silence was preserved by both her attendants, and they moved with a caution that allowed not a step to be heard. Friar Rushak halted suddenly, and turned round; the lamp flashed upon his face, and showed his angry eye; the Lady Beatrice fell back in terror into the arms of the Franciscan behind her. Friar Rushak put his finger to his open mouth, and then told her, in a whisper, to suppress the high breathing which her fears had created. The Lady Beatrice endeavoured to obey. Friar Rushak motioned to her and the Franciscan to remain where they were; he advanced three or four paces with great caution, and, slowly opening a concealed door, listened for a moment; then gently pushing aside the tapestry within, he thrust forward his head, and again withdrawing it, motioned to Beatrice and the Franciscan to advance.

"They sleep," whispered he. "Follow me—but no word, sign, or breath, as thou dost value thy life."

Friar Rushak entered within the tapestry,

and the Lady Beatrice followed him into a magnificent chamber, lighted by a single lamp. A gorgeous bed occupied one end of the apartment. Over it, attached to the heavy Gothic ceiling, was a gilded crown, whence descended a crimson drapery, richly emblazoned with the royal arms of England, under which lay a young man, his head only appearing above the bed-clothes. She hastily glanced at his features, which the lamp but dimly illuminated. It was King Richard. His dark eye-lashes were closed, but she trembled lest he should awaken. Around the room were several couches, where his pages ought to have watched, but where they lay as sound as their royal master.

They had hardly stepped into the room, when a little dog came growling from under the King's bed. The Lady Beatrice had nearly sunk on the floor, but the little favourite of the Monarch instantly recognised Friar Rushak as a well-known friend, and quietly retreated to his place of repose. The pages showed no symptom of alarm, but the King turned in bed, and exposed his head more fully to view. The Lady Beatrice shook from head to foot as she looked towards him; but her apprehension was excited yet more immediately, when she beheld Friar Rushak at her side, with a menacing eye, and a

dagger in his grasp. A sign at once conveyed to her that it was silence he wanted; and though she ventured not to breathe, her heart beat so against her side as she stood, that she felt as if the very sound of its pulsations would break the slumbers of all around her. Again the King was quiet, and Friar Rushak moved on towards the opposite door. The Lady Beatrice drew the cowl more over her face, and without daring to repeat her glance at the King, followed with as much caution as her sinking knees would permit her to use.

The door was opened by Friar Rushak with the utmost gentleness, and they found themselves at one extremity of a suite of apartments, the long perspective of which was seen running onwards from one to another, and where they could perceive groups of dozing domestics lying on chairs, and stretched on benches, in every possible position. Through one of these rooms they passed, and then retreated by a side-door into a narrow circular stair, by which they descended to the hall of entrance, where they found about a dozen archers sitting slumbering by a great fire. These men roused themselves on their approach, and, starting up, sprang forward to bar their passage with their halberds. The Lady Beatrice became alarmed, and, in the

trepidation that seized her, dropped the friar's habit that had hitherto concealed her.

"Ha!" exclaimed one of the soldiers, "a woman and two monks! Who may that considerate lord have been who hath thus taken the shrift with the sin?"

"Silence, Barnaby," cried another man; "that is the holy Father Rushak, the King's confessor."

"Let me pass, knaves," cried Rushak.

"Ay, ay, let him pass," said another man; "he hath right of entrance and outgoing at all hours. I would not have thee try to stop him, an thou would'st sleep in a whole skin to-morrow night."

The passage was cleared in a moment. The Lady Beatrice, overpowered with apprehension, was supported by the Franciscan.

"Come on, brother," cried Friar Rushak.

"She faints," cried the Franciscan.

"Lift her in thine arms, then," cried Rushak.

The Franciscan raised her from the ground, and carried her half senseless to the door. At that moment a man entered, and brushed by them in breathless haste. He looked behind him at the group.

"The Lady Beatrice!" cried he. "Ha, whither do ye carry her, villains?"

"Answer him not, but run," said Rushak, flying off at full speed across the court, followed by the sturdy Franciscan, who carried his fair burden as if he felt not her weight. The steps of many people were heard following them. All at once the noise of a desperate scuffle ensued behind them, and the two monks, who staid not to inquire the nature of it, pressed on towards a low archway that ran under the river-wall. The air blew fresh from the river on Beatrice's cheek. She revived, and found that he who carried her was standing near an iron gate of ponderous strength, which Friar Rushak was making vain attempts to open.

"Holy St Francis assist us!" cried he, "I fear that my hands have erred, and that I have unluckily possessed myself of the wrong key."

"Hush," said the Franciscan, "and keep close. The step of the sentinel on the wall above falls louder. He cometh this way."

They drew themselves closer to the wall. The sentinel's step passed onward to the extremity of his walk, and then slowly returning, it again moved by, and the sound of it sank along the wall.

"Try the key again, brother," said the Franciscan; "the man is beyond hearing."

Friar Rushak again applied the key; the

great bolt yielded before it; the gate creaked upon its hinges, and the Franciscan deposited his trembling burden, more dead than alive, in a little skiff that lay in the creek of the river running under the vault.

"Thanks, kind brother," said the Franciscan, in a low tone of voice, to Friar Rushak; "a thousand thanks for thy friendly aid."

"Hush! the sentinel comes again," whispered Friar Rushak.

They remained perfectly still until the man had completed his turn, and was gone beyond hearing.

"Now thou mayest venture to depart," said Friar Rushak—"away, and St Francis be with thee!" And so saying, he waved his hand, shut the gate, and quickly disappeared.

The Franciscan got into the boat. A little crooked man, who had hitherto lain like a bundle of clothes in the bottom of it, started up, and began pushing it along, by putting his hands against the side-walls, until he got beyond the vault. Then he sat down, and pulled the oars.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel, "who goes there?—Answer me, an thou would'st not have a quarrel-bolt in thy brain."

The Franciscan minded not, and the little figure went on, pulling with all his might. Bea-

trice sat trembling with affright. It was dark, but she heard the sentinel's step running along the wall, as if following the sound of the oars. He halted; the click of the spring of his arbaleste reached her ear, and the bolt that it gave wings to had nearly reached her too, for it struck with great force on the inside of the boat that was opposite to the man who shot it. The rower pulled off farther into the stream. The sentinel's cry for raising the guard was heard; but the tide was now running down, and it bore the little boat on its bosom with so much swiftness, that they soon lost all sound of the alarm.

"Tell me, oh tell me, who art thou, and whither thou dost carry me?" cried Beatrice, her heart sinking with alarm as she beheld the walls of the city left behind them.

"Daughter, this is neither the time nor the place for the explanation thou dost lack," replied the Franciscan; "methinks I do hear the sound of oars behind us. Let me aid thee, Bobbin," cried he, taking one of the oars, and beginning to pull desperately.

The united strength of the two rowers now made the little boat fly like an arrow, and in a short time the eyes of the Lady Beatrice were attracted by five lights that burned bright in

the middle of the river, and hung in the form of St Andrew's cross.

"St Francis be praised," cried the Franciscan; "we are now near the bark that is to give us safety. Pull, Bobbin, my brave heart."

The lights grew in magnitude in the Lady Beatrice's eyes, and the water beneath the shadowy hull blazed with the bright reflection.

"Hoy the skiff!" cried a stern voice, in a north-country accent.

"St Andrew!" replied the Franciscan.

"Welcome, St Andrew," said the voice from the vessel. "Hast thou sped, holy father?"

"Yea, by the blessing of St Francis and the Virgin," replied the Franciscan.

The lights, which were suspended to a frame attached to the round top of the short thick mast, were at once extinguished. The skiff came alongside, and the Lady Beatrice was lifted, unresisting, into the vessel, and carried directly into the cabin, and in a few minutes the anchor was weighed.

"So, my brave men," cried the master to his sailors, after they had got the anchor on board; "now, hoise up the main-sail. Take the helm, Bobbin; we shall drop slowly down till daylight doth appear."

"Art thou sure of shaping thy course safely through all these intricate windings?" demanded the Franciscan.

"Yea," replied the commander, "as sure as thou hast thyself seen me, when running between the Bass and the May. What, dost thou think that I have been herrying these English loons so long without gathering sea-craft as well as plunder? And then, have I not crooked Bobbin here as my pilot, who was bred and born in this serpent of a river?" By St Rule, but he knoweth every sweep and turn, yea, and every sand and shoal-bank, blindfold. Had I not had some such hands on board, how dost thou think I could have carried off that spice-ship so cunningly, having to steer her through so many villainous eel-knots?"

"I see thou art not a whit less daring than thy sire," said the Franciscan.

"Nay, an I were, I should ill deserve the gallant name of Mercer," replied the other. "Thou didst witness enow of his exploits, I ween, the while that thou wert aboard of him, to remember thee well that he did neither want head to conceive, boldness to dare, nor coolness to execute. Trust me, I lack not my father's spirit; and though I have not the fortune to sail with a fleet of stout barks at my back, as

he was wont to do, yet while the timbers of the tough old Trueman do hold together beneath me, I shall work these Southrons some cruel evil, to revenge the loss of my father and his ships.—Haul from the land, Bobbin; haul off, to weather that point. Climb the forecastle and look out there, he who hath the watch."

CHAPTER X.

Let us now return to Sir Patrick Hepborne, and inquire into his fate, as well as endeavour to explain how he was enabled to render so speedy aid to the Lady Beatrice.

After having heard everything from the minstrel, he resolved to avail himself of the invitation he had received from the Lady de Vere; by doing which immediately, he hoped to have some happy accidental opportunity of seeing and conversing with the Lady Beatrice. He had no sooner presented himself at the door of her apartments, than a page, who seemed to have been on the watch for him, sprang forward, and ushered him into a small chamber, voluptuously furnished, and moderately lighted by a single lamp. In his way thither, he heard voices and laughing in another place. The page left him, and in a very short time he heard the light trip of a woman's foot. The door opened, and the Lady de Vere

entered alone. She accosted him with an easy gaiety of manner, and, ordering her page to bring in spiced wine, she began to assail his heart with all the allurements of which she was mistress. Sir Patrick, still hoping for an opportunity of seeing her whom he so much loved, mustered up all his ingenuity to keep the lady in play, but his mind was so much employed in thinking of the Lady Beatrice, that he ministered but awkwardly to the coquetry of the Lady de Vere, and met her warm advances so coldly, that she began to think in her own mind, that this phœnix of Scottish chivalry was little better than a frigid fool.

It was whilst he was engaged in playing this truly difficult game, that the shrieks of the Lady Beatrice reached his ear. He started up at once from the Lady de Vere's side, and, drawing his sword, made his way with the speed of lightning towards the chamber whence the screams proceeded, and, with the force of a thunderbolt centred in his foot, burst open the door, as we have already seen. The Lady de Vere, boiling with indignation at being so abandoned by him, called for some of the King's guards, and, arriving with them just in time to hear the language in which he was talking of her to Beatrice, her rage knew no bounds, and the reader

is already aware to what a cruel extremity it carried her against the hapless lovers.

The blow Sir Patrick received, though it effectually stunned him, was by no means fatal. When he recovered from the swoon into which it had thrown him, he found himself stretched on a heap of straw, on the floor of a dungeon. The gray twilight that peeped through a small grated window, placed high in the wall, told him that morning was approaching. He arose, with a head giddy from the blow it had received, and found that the axe-wound in his scalp had bled so profusely as to have deluged his hair, and so clotted it together, that it had of itself stopped the effusion. The knight then began to examine the place of his confinement, when, to his surprise, he beheld another prisoner in the vault, who seemed to sleep soundly. Sir Patrick approached to look upon him, and he was not a little astonished to discover that it was no other than his landlord, Master Lawrence Ratcliffe. He hesitated for a time to disturb so sound a repose; but at length curiosity to know how he came there got the better of everything else, and he gently shook him from his slumbers. The wine-merchant started up—rubbed his eyes—betrayed, by his look of terror, that he was awakened to a full recollection of his situation, and that he feared

he was called to meet his doom; till, seeing that it was his Scottish guest whose countenance he beheld, his expression changed.

"So, thou hast come to look upon the victim of thy traiterie," said he, with a reproachful tone.

"What meanest thou, my good friend?" replied Hepborne; "I am a prisoner here, as well as thyself."

"Ha, ha! So, then, whilst they listened to thy tale, they did begin to suspect thee of having had some share in the treason," said Ratcliffe.

"What treason?" demanded Hepborne; "I protest, on the honour of a knight, that I am altogether ignorant of what thou dost mean. Believe me, I am here for no matter connected with aught that thou may'st have done. My crime is the having dared to rescue a virtuous demoiselle from the wicked assault of King Richard. I was on the eve of springing forward to punish him on the spot for his villainy, when he fled. I was suddenly rendered senseless by a blow from the halbert of one of his guards, and I recovered not from my swoon until I found myself on yonder straw. But what, I pr'ythee, hath made thee the tenant of this gloomy dungeon?"

"And art thou really innocent of betraying

me, then?" demanded Ratcliffe, with a strong remnant of doubt in his countenance.

"I have already declared, on the faith of knighthood, that I know not what I could have betrayed thee in," replied Hepborne, a little dipleased that his truth should be thus questioned: "Depardieux, I am not wont to be thus interrogated and suspected."

"Nay, pardon me, good Sir Knight," cried Master Ratcliffe, starting up, and stretching out his hand to Hepborne; "by St Paul, I do now most readily believe thee, and I am heartily ashamed of having ever doubted thee for a moment. But thou camest in on us so strangely, as we were in conclave assembled, that when my arrest came at midnight, I could not but believe that thou hadst betrayed me."

"What could I have betrayed thee in?" said Sir Patrick; "I came in on thee and thy friends by an accident, and I neither did know, nor did I seek to know, the subject of your deliberation."

"Nay, trust me, it was matter of no weight, Sir Knight," cried Ratcliffe eagerly; "simple traffic, I promise thee. Yet men's most innocent dealings be cruelly perverted in these slippery times; and some one, I trow, hath sorely misrepresented mine, else had I not been here.

But right glad am I to find that thou art free from such suspicion; for verily the disappointment I felt in discovering that thou wert, as I did then think, a traitor, was even more bitter to me than the traiterie of the which I did suppose thee guilty. But tell me, Sir Knight," said he, rapidly changing the subject, and speaking with an air of eagerness, "tell me how did King Richard escape thine arm? Methought that arm of thine mought have crushed him like a gnat. Ha! trust me, thou needst have had no fear that England should have lacked a Monarch, if thou hadst chanced to have rid her of him who now reigns. But, blessed St Erkenwold, what noise is that I hear? Holy St Mary grant that there be not spies about us!"

The door of the dungeon opened, a man entered, and the guards who brought him retreated, after again locking the door.

"Mortimer Sang!" cried Sir Patrick Hepborne; "what, I pray thee, hath brought thee hither? There was at least some spark of kindness in their thus admitting thee to visit thy master."

"Nay, not a whit, Sir Knight," replied Sang; "for albeit I am right glad to have the good fortune thus to share thy captivity, by St Bal-

drid, I came hither as no matter of favour, seeing I am a prisoner like thyself."

"A prisoner!" cried Hepborne; "and what canst thou have done to merit imprisonment?"

"I sat up for thee yesternight, until I did become alarmed for thy safety, Sir Knight," replied Sang; "and knowing those who had the guard at the Tower-gate, I made my way in, and was in the act of entering the palace to inquire about thee, when, as I crossed the threshold, I was met by two friars, one of whom bore a lady in his arms. She was disguised in a monk's habit; but my recollection of Maurice de Grey, together with what your worship hath told me, made me recognise her at once as the Lady Beatrice. The Franciscan who carried her——"

"Franciscan!" cried Hepborne. "What! he who came to Lochyndorbe to denounce the Bishop of Moray's threatened excommunication against Lord Badenoch?"

"The same," replied Sang.

"Then," cried Hepborne in distraction, "then hath the hapless lady's murder been made the consummation of their guilt. That friar was an assassin. He did once attempt her life at midnight. Ah, would I could break through these walls, to sacrifice him who hath been the

author of a deed so foul; would I were led forth to death, for that alone can now give relief to my misery. But," continued he, turning reproachfully to his esquire, "how could'st thou behold her whom my soul adores thus borne to her death, and not strike one blow for her deliverance?"

"Nay, verily I did rush to her rescue, Sir Knight," replied Sang; "but ere I could reach her, I was beset by some dozen of the guards from the palace, and ere I wist, I was beaten to the earth, captured, and thrown into a vault, where I lay for the remainder of the night, and whence I have been this moment brought hither, being accused of treason, in attempting to enter the royal palace at midnight, with intent to kill the King."

Hepborne threw himself down on his straw, and yielded himself up to the full flood of the affliction that came on him with the thought of the Lady Beatrice's fate. He reproached himself in a thousand ways for not having prevented that over which he could have had no control; and neither his esquire, nor Master Laurence Ratcliffe, could succeed in giving him the smallest consolation.

CHAPTER XI.

The bark which we left threading its way down the mazes of the Thames, made a tedious and difficult passage northwards along the coast of England. It was sometimes borne on by favouring breezes, but it often encountered furious contrary blasts, that compelled the dauntless Mercer, its commander, to yield before them, and to submit to be driven back for many a league. We must not forget, that naval architecture and nautical science were then, comparatively speaking, in their infancy. The hull of this Scottish privateer, or pirate, as she was called by the English, was awkwardly encumbered by two enormous erections. One of these, over the stern, is still recognized, in some degree, in the poop of our larger ships. Of the other, called the forecastle, although nothing now remains but the name, it was then in reality, a tower of considerable height, manned during an engagement by cross-bow-men, who

were enabled to gall the enemy very severely from that elevated position. The masts were three, one rising from the middle of the vessel, and the others from the two extremities, each formed of one thick short tree, the main-mast being the largest. At the upper end of each mast was fixed a circular stage, walled strongly in with wood; these were called the round-tops, and were large enough to admit of several warriors being stationed in them. Each mast had but one sail hanging from its yard, and that attached to the main-mast was the only sheet of magnitude.

"Ha! what say'st thou now, Barnard?" exclaimed Mercer, slapping on the shoulder his steersman, an old sailor, who had served him, and his father before him, for some fifty years, in the same capacity, and whose back was bent by his constant position at the helm; "methinks this is the only breeze that hath promised to be steady during these fourteen days of our wearisome voyage. An it do but last for some good hour or twain, we may hope to see the other side of St Abbs yonder."

"Ay," replied Barnard, casting his eye over his left shoulder, "but I like not yonder wide-flaming cloud, that doth heave itself up so i' the sou'-west, Master Mercer. I'm no sailor, an it

be not big with something worse than aught we have had yet to deal with."

"Come, come, no evil-omened croaking, Master Barnard," replied Mercer; "should the breeze freshen, we shall speed but the faster."

"Nay, but I do tell thee, there is some cruel ill-nature yonder," said Barnard, sticking testily to his point.

"By St Rule, but it doth look somewhat angry," replied Mercer. "We must get more under the lee of the land ere the mischief cometh."

"By St Paul, but it doth come already," cried Barnard; "seest thou not yonder white-topped waves tripping after us?"

"By the mass, but it doth come indeed," cried Mercer, jumping forward. "Ha, there goeth the fore-sail flying through the air like a sea-mew. Down with the main-sail—Come, stir ye, stir ye, my hearts. Out with your long-sweeps, my brave spirits—Put her head to the land, Barnard. Pull yarely now, my gallants. There is a lull yonder beneath the rocks."

"'Tis a lull thou wilt never reach, I'll promise thee, Master Mercer, pull as thou wilt," said old Barnard gruffly. "Better let her drive to the open sea before the storm. See how angry yonder sinking sun doth look. Trust me, no

human power may force her against the tempest. But thou art ever for working impossibilities."

"Tush, old man," cried Mercer; "time enow to give in when we shall have tried and failed. I have no fancy for a run to Norway, if, by any means, we may reach the bonny Firth o' Forth. So put her head more to the land, I say."

In obedience to the command of his resolute master, the old helmsman, grumbling like a bear, put the bark into the course he had ordered, and the mariners, aided by the pike and cross-bow-men, put their hands steadily to the long-oars. The brave Mercer moved actively about, giving life and spirit to their exertions. The storm rapidly increased, and he climbed the forecastle to look out a-head.

"Mercy on us," cried old Barnard, "there burneth a blue flame at the fore-mast head. 'Tis gone. Some one is near his end, I trow. Run, boy, and tell the master to come down. He is, as it were, mine own son, and I like not to see him yonder after that dismal warning."

The ship-boy carried the steersman's message; but Mercer laughed and heeded it not.

"Here, Peter Patullo, do thou take the helm

a bit," cried the old man, becoming anxious. "He is so wilful, I must go to him myself."

Barnard had hardly spoken, when a tremendous wave came rolling on against the head of the ship, and striking the forecastle, a dreadful crash followed, the huge timber tower being swept away like a cobweb.

"Holy mother of God, he is gone," cried Barnard. "My master—Oh! the boy I nursed, as I may say. Ha, see'st thou nought of him?" cried the distracted old man, running to the lee-side of the ship, which was drifting broadside on, from the sudden cessation of the panic-struck rowers. "Ha, he's there; I see him; I saw him as he was heaved up on the bosom of the billow. I'll save him, or I'll perish with him."

"Stop him," cried the Franciscan, who had rushed from the cabin on hearing the confused cry; "stop him, he plunges to certain destruction."

But old Barnard was too alert for them all. He was overboard ere any of them could reach him.

"Madman," cried the Franciscan, hastily picking up a rope; and as the sea lifted up the bulky form of the old skipper, who hung for some moments poised, as it were, on the crest

of the wave, he, with great dexterity, threw a coil of it over him, and Barnard was dragged, most miraculously, on board, being unwillingly saved from his rash, though generous, but utterly hopeless attempt.

Meanwhile the brave Mercer was borne away, seemingly to certain destruction. Everything was done by the active Franciscan to bring the bark near him. He was seen, now tossed on the high top of a mountainous surge, and now far down in the gulph out of which it had swelled itself. Sometimes he was thrown violently towards them, and again he was whirled far away with the velocity of thought; yet amidst all the horrors of the apparently inevitable death that surrounded him, he struggled with a calmness that showed his undaunted soul, and seemed determined to husband his strength as long as hope remained. A rope with a noose upon it was thrown to him. He had watched the endeavours his friends were making to save him, and he now exerted all his strength and skill to aid them. After many an unsuccessful effort, he at last caught the rope, and, with great adroitness, passed the noose over his head and arms. The Franciscan, and the half-frantic helmsman, aided by some of the crew, began to pull him gently towards the vessel. A

long rolling wave came, and dashed him against the ship's side. He was hastily pulled up—but life was for ever extinct.

The deepest grief fell upon the crew when they beheld their beloved commander thus stretched inanimate before them; and they forgot their own safety, and that of the vessel, in their affliction for his loss. Poor old Barnard hung over the dripping corpse of his master, and seemed to be utterly unconscious of all that was passing around him.

"Alas!" he cried, looking in his face, and putting back his drenched locks with his rough hand as he said so, "would I had but sunk ere I had beheld thee so. I had never the blessing of wife or of children, but I did esteem thy father as my son; yea, and thou wert as the grandchild of mine old age. Thou did'st grow to be a man under mine own especial nurture. I had pride and pleasure in thy gallantry and in thy success. Right cheerfully did I work for thee; ay, and would have worked for thee whiles my old timbers did hang together; but now, sith that thou art gone, I have but little tie to this world. I care not how soon I weigh anchor for the land of souls; for what have I, a poor old lonesome man, to do here without thee? Let fresher hands take the watch, for—I—I—" his

feelings overcame his hardy nature for a moment, but he recovered himself. "Take care no harm comes over his corpse," cried he, looking sternly round upon his shipmates. "Let it be laid decently out in his own birth—and—and——" His voice again became choked—he coughed—he put his hands to his eyes—and turning hastily away, disappeared into the hole that was his usual place of repose, to bury his emotions in darkness and silence.

After the loss of Mercer, there was an utter confusion and want of system among the under officers and crew, until the Franciscan monk boldly assumed the command. Many of those on board had sailed with him in the days of old Mercer, and being well acquainted with his resolute mind, as well as with his nautical knowledge, they scrupled not to obey him. He was indefatigable in his exertions; but nothing he could do availed, and he was compelled to allow the bark, crazed as she was, to drift before the wind, with every fear of her foundering.

Dreadful was the night that ensued, and anxiously did every soul on board long for morning, but when it came it was like a mimic night. The clouds hung darkly over the sea, as if about to mingle with it. Torrents of rain fell; and the waves arose like peaked mountains, their

whitened tops piercing the black vault of the clouds. The tempestuous wind seemed to shift from one point to another; and they were so tossed to and fro that they became bewildered, and could not even avail themselves of the imperfect needle then in use. Land they could see none; and when the second night fell upon them, each man gave his soul to the care of the Virgin or his patron saint, persuaded that there was but little chance of ever seeing another sun.

Meanwhile the hardy Franciscan never quailed, nor did he ever leave the deck. Little could be done to aid the ship, but he ceased not to encourage the mariners, both by his voice and his example.

At last the tempest seemed to yield. The wind became hushed, and although the swell of the sea continued for some hours, yet it diminished every moment, and went on gradually moderating until day-break. By this time the sky had cleared itself of the clouds that had hitherto obscured it, the sun rose above the horizon in full splendour, and a faint hope arose with it that the vessel might yet be saved. But no land was yet visible. The needle was consulted, and it was determined to hoist the mainsail, and to avail themselves of an eastern breeze, to steer in that direction, where they knew the

British coast must lie; and two men, who were placed in the round-top to look out a-head, soon cheered them with the intelligence that the land was visible; upon which they gave thanks to Heaven, and, as they scudded gently before the breeze, the blue mountains began to appear in the distant haze, and were swelling every moment upon their sight.

Now it was that some of the older men in the ship came to inform the Franciscan that it had been the wish of Mercer, repeatedly expressed during his life, that wherever he might die, he should, if possible, be buried at sea; and since the cessation of the storm permitted them to have some leisure, the monk gave directions accordingly to prepare for the solemn rite. Old Barnard had never appeared since the moment he left the deck after the catastrophe that befell Mercer, and the struggle the crew had been maintaining, ever since, with the angry elements, had hindered any one from visiting him where he had retreated. He was now sent for; but the sailor who went for him speedily returned with a face of alarm, to report that he could get no answer from him. The Franciscan then lighted a lamp, and went below, followed by several anxious faces. There lay the old man, wrapped up in a blanket, in his birth. His head was

turned from them. The Franciscan shook him gently, but he stirred not. He then turned him round, and the light of the lamp fell upon his face. It was ghastly; the eyes were glazed, and the rough features fixed in death. He seemed to have died soon after he had lain down; but whether he had suffered some fatal injury in his noble attempt to save Mercer, or whether he had died of a broken heart for the loss of the brave young man, to whom he was so much attached, it was impossible to say.

Preparations were made for bestowing upon old Barnard the same funeral rites as were contemplated for his master. The religious duties were performed over both by the Franciscan, and both were consigned together to the deep, amidst the tears that fell from many a weather-beaten face.

The breeze continued, and the distant mountains grew every moment more and more distinct; but long ere they had approached the land sufficiently near to enable them to determine what part of the coast they were borne towards, a thick fog arose, and put an end to every speculation on the subject, by shutting it entirely from their eyes. The vessel laboured exceedingly, from her shattered condition, and there was no hope of safety left for

them but to avail themselves to the utmost of the favourable breeze that still continued to blow. It lasted them bravely, and carried them cheerily on until sunset, but then it fell calm; and the mist clearing away, the moon arose, and showed them a bold coast some miles to the south. Farther on the land became lower, and thither the Franciscan made the crew pull with all their might. As they neared the land, the Lady Beatrice was brought out, half-dead, upon the deck, to be prepared for disembarking immediately, the frail vessel beginning every moment to show more alarming symptoms of the shattered state to which the continued storm had reduced it. They now beheld the lights in some fishermen's huts on the shore, and the distant murmur of the waves, breaking gently on the beach, was the cheering music of hope to them. All at once the vessel struck upon some sunken rock or sand, and instantly began to fill. The confusion was dreadful. The Franciscan approached Beatrice, and quickly made her sensible of her danger. The boat was got out, but it was instantly overloaded—sunk—and all were in the water.

"Hold fast by my cowl, and fear not," cried the Franciscan, who had the wisdom to stick to the vessel, and who now committed himself

to the waves, as it went down under them. Where all were men accustomed to the sea, all were necessarily swimmers, and all made lustily for the shore. Thither also did the bold monk press his way, the Lady Beatrice hanging, with the gripe of fate, to his cowl; and the distance being but short, and the sea smooth, she was soon placed in safety upon the beach, whence he quickly carried her to the fishermen's cottages.

The poor inhabitants of the fishing-hamlet did all in their power to cherish the unfortunate people who were thus shipwrecked amongst them, but it was little they could do; and the comfort of a large fire was the utmost that any of the hovels could furnish. The Franciscan eagerly inquired what part of the coast they had been thrown on; and he declared, that since it had pleased the saints to deny them an entrance into the Frith of Forth, where lay their destination, he had reason to rejoice that they had taken land on the eastern coast of Moray. The Lady Beatrice, who had never held up her head during the tempestuous voyage, was grievously weakened by sickness. She sank down exhausted on the wretched pallet that was provided for her, and, eager as was the Franciscan to proceed with her to Elgin, the following day

was far spent before she could gather strength enough to undertake even so short a ride. Horses were then procured, and they arrived at the gates of the hospital of the Maison Dieu, where they were kindly received by the pious brethren, and the sisterhood, who administered the hospitalities of the institution to pilgrims and strangers of the better sort, as well as its charities to the poor.

CHAPTER XII.

THE Franciscan left the Lady Beatrice with the nuns of the establishment, and hastened to present himself before the Bishop of Moray, who was then at his palace of Spynie, at some distance from the town. He found the good man in deep conference with some of his canons, and he received him joyfully.

"Blessed be St Francis that thou art arrived, Friar John," said the Bishop aloud, after they had whispered together apart. "Thou comest right seasonably, seeing we do discuss the endless theme of the Wolfe of Badenoch."

"What! my Lord Bishop of Moray," cried the Franciscan, "hath that destroying angel been again let loose, to invade the holy territory of the Church?—to burn and to devastate?"

"Nay, nay, Friar John," replied the Bishop, "for this time the news we have to tell thee are good. The King hath sent a body of troops

to dispossess his sacrilegious son from our Badenoch lands, and they are now again in the hands of the tenants of the Church. What sayest thou to this?"

"Um," replied the Franciscan, doubtfully shaking his head—"and do the King's troops tarry in Badenoch, to guard the possessions of the Church?"

"Nay, that I do not believe," replied the Bishop; "but methinks he will hardly try so daring an attempt again."

"Hast thou brought down his proud spirit, then, to entreat on his knees for the removal of thine anathema?" demanded the Friar.

"Nay, as well hope to make the eagle stoop to the earth, and quail before me," replied the Bishop.

"In truth, then, my Lord Bishop," said the Franciscan, "thou mayest as well hope to reclaim the eagle, so that he shall sit on thy wrist like a falcon, as look for peace from the Wolfe of Badenoch."

"Dost thou indeed think so?" demanded the Bishop. "Methought that after his royal father's reproof, and this his late signal interference against him, we might have looked for peace. Something must be tried, then. To thee, Friar John, we shall look for counsel, and the

sooner we do have it the better. So shall we straightway ride with thee to Elgin, and summon a Chapter, that we may consider of this weighty matter."

The Franciscan accordingly returned to the town with the Bishop and his attendants, and such of the canons as were within call were immediately summoned. The Bishop then occupied his stall within the chapter-house, supported by his Dean, Archdean, Chancellor, and Chanter; and the other members having taken their places, they remained some hours in council. When the Chapter broke up, the Bishop held some private conference with the Franciscan, and then permitted him to go to his lodging in the Maison Dieu, whither he was happy to retire, being overpowered by exhaustion from his late fatigues, and glad to be at last allowed to seek the needful refreshment of a few hours' rest.

The vesper hymn had died away through the lengthened aisles of the venerable cathedral; every note of labour or of mirth was silenced within the town. The weary burghers were sunk in sleep, and even the members of the various holy fraternities had retired to their repose. No eye was awake, save those of a few individuals among the religious, who, having

habits of more than ordinary severity of discipline, had doomed themselves to wear the hard pavement with their bare knees, and the hours in endless repetition of penitential prayers before the shrine of the Virgin, or the image of some favourite saint. Not even a dog was heard to stir in the streets. They were as dark, too, as they were silent; for, with the exception of a feeble lamp or two, that burned in niches before the little figures set up here and there for Popish worship, there was nothing to interrupt the deep obscurity that prevailed.

Suddenly the sound of a large body of horsemen was heard entering the town from the west. The dreams of the burghers were broken, and they were roused from their slumbers; the casements were opened, one after another, as the band passed along, and many a curious head was thrust out. They moved on alertly, without talking; but although they uttered no sounds, and were but dimly seen, the clank of their weapons, and of their steel harness, told well enough that they were no band of vulgar, peace-loving merchants, but a troop of stirring men-at-arms; and many was the cheek that blenched, and many was the ejaculation that escaped the shuddering lips of the timid burghers, as they shrunk within their houses at the alarming con-

viction. They crossed and blessed themselves after the warriors had passed by, and each again sought his bed.

But the repose of the inhabitants was for that night doomed to be short. Distant shrieks of despair, mingled with shouts of exultation, began to arise in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral, and the College, in which all the houses of the Canons were clustered; and soon the town was alarmed from its centre to its suburbs by the confused cries of half-naked fugitives, who hurried along into the country, as if rushing from some dreadful danger.

"Fire, fire!—murder!—fire, fire!—the Wolfe of Badenoch!"

The terrible name of the fell Earl of Buchan was enough, of itself, to have spread universal panic through the town, even in the midst of broad sunshine. But darkness now magnified their fears. Every one hastened to huddle on what garments might be at hand, and to seize what things were most valuable and portable; and all, without exception—men, women, and children—hurried out into the streets, to seek immediate safety in flight. As the crowd pressed onwards, scarcely daring to look behind them, they beheld the intense darkness of the night invaded by flames that began to shoot upwards

in fitful jets. The screams and the shouts rang in their ears, and they quickened their trembling speed; their voices subdued by fear, as they went, into indistinct whispers of horror. No one dared to stop; but, urging on his own steps, he dragged after him those of his feeble parents, or tottering wife, or helpless children.

Those who were most timorous, halted not until they had hid themselves in the neighbouring woods; but those whose curiosity was in some degree an equipoise to their fears, stopped to look behind them whenever a view of the town could be obtained, that they might judge of, and lament over, the devastation that was going forward. Already they could see that the College, the Church of St Giles, and the Hospital of the Maison Dieu, were burning; but these were all forgotten, as they beheld the dire spectacle of the Cathedral, illuminated throughout all the rich tracery of its Gothic windows by a furious fire, that was already raging high within it. Groans and lamentations burst from their hearts, and loud curses were poured out on the impious heads of those whose fury had led them to destroy so glorious a fabric, an edifice which they had been taught to venerate from their earliest infancy, and to which they were attached by every association, divine and human,

that could possibly bind the heart of man. In the midst of their wailings, the pitchy vault of heaven began to be reddened by the glare of the spreading conflagration; and the loud and triumphant shouts that now arose, unmingled with those cries of terror which had at first blended with them, too plainly told that the power of the destroyer was resistless.

As the Lady Beatrice and the Franciscan were the last comers among the crowd of pilgrims and travellers who that night filled the charitable caravansera of the Maison Dieu, they had been put to lodge in the very uppermost story of the antique and straggling building. The lady occupied a chamber at the extremity of a long passage, running through one wing that was dedicated to the use of the few sisters who inhabited the Hospital, and their female guests. The Franciscan was thrust into a little turret-room that hung from one angle of a gable at the very opposite end of the edifice, being connected with the garrets that lay over that wing occupied by the preaching brethren and the guests of their own sex. There was no direct communication between the opposite parts of the building where the lady and the friar were lodged. The main stair, that opened from the doorway of the Hospital, arose within the body

of the house, and several narrow passages branched off from it, having separate stairs leading to the different parts of the higher regions.

The brethren and sisters of the institution, as well as the numerous temporary inmates of its various chambers, were alarmed by the shrieks that arose when the firebrands were at first applied to the Cathedral, and the houses of the clergy connected with it. Neither the permanent nor the accidental tenants of the house had much personal property to remove, and what they had was instantly carried out by a general rush into the court-yard, whence they hastily escaped, each prompted by a desire of self-preservation. Not so the Lady Beatrice and the Franciscan. Both of them had suffered so much from want of natural rest, and the monk especially had undergone fatigue of body so lengthened and so severe, during the protracted storm they had lately had to struggle with, that they lay as unconscious of the noise as if their senses had been locked up by the influence of some powerful opiate. The Lady Beatrice, indeed, was half awakened by the din occasioned by the escape of those who were in the house. But she had been dreaming of the ship and of the sea, and the hurry of the retreating steps,

and the confused voice of alarm, having speedily subsided within the Hospital, she turned again to enjoy a more profound repose, believing it was her fancy that had made her imagine she had heard the sound of the waves and the winds, and the bustling tread of the mariners.

Again a noise came, that increased and jarred in her ears, and a vivid light arose, that flickered through the casement into the place where she lay, and falling strongly on her face, her silken eyelashes were gradually opened, and terror seizing upon her, she sprang at once from her couch to the window. Then it was that she beheld the court of the Hospital below filled with mounted men-at-arms, together with numbers on foot, who seemed to be active agents in kindling combustibles, by the use of which the whole main body of the building was already in flames,—as she could easily guess from the suffocating smoke that arose, and the red glare that was thrown over the features of those who, with their faces turned upwards, were watching the progress of the devouring element with a fiendish expression of satisfaction.

Half dead with fear, the Lady Beatrice began to hurry on her garments, doubtful, in the state of distraction she was thrown into, whether she

might or ought to hope to escape from the fire, since she could not possibly do so without exposing herself to the fury of a savage band, whose present occupation was enough to proclaim them enemies of the most reckless description. She was bewildered, and knew not what to do. The towers and spires of the Cathedral were blazing like gigantic torches. The darkness of night seemed to be put to flight; and distant yells arising from time to time, proclaimed the multitude who were actors in this scene of ruin.

But the more pressing danger brought her at last to recollection, and she rushed from her chamber to make an effort to escape. Already were the narrow passages filled with a stifling smoke, which she made some faint efforts to penetrate; but finding it impossible to proceed, she returned to her chamber, and, throwing herself upon her knees, grew faint from despair. Recovering herself in some degree, she grasped her croslet, and began offering up her prayers for that mercy in the next world, of which she believed she had now no hope in this; and as she was so employed, she thought she felt the very boards heating beneath her. She sprang to her feet, and again approached the open casement, that she

might breathe more freely. At that moment a loud murmur, rather than a cry, arose in the court below.

"He cometh—'tis he—'tis he himself.—The Earl—the Earl of Buchan—the Wolfe of Badenoch!—Hush!"—And their clamour was instantly silenced.

"Out o' my way," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, as, armed cap-a-pie, and with his vizor up, he came galloping furiously in at the Gothic gateway, followed by his four younger sons, and some forty or fifty mounted spearmen and axemen. The pavement rattled under the clatter of their iron-shod hooves, and their polished mail flashed back the blaze of the flaming edifice.

"Ha, ha, ha! by all the fiends, but the mischief doth work well here too," shouted he, laughing wildly as he reined up his steed, with a check that threw him backwards on his haunches; "yet this is but baby's work, compared to the blazing towers yonder—ha, ha, ha! The haughty pile, on the which the pride of that scurvy Priest-Bishop hath heretofore been so loftily perched, will soon be prostrate amidst its own dust and ashes. Ha! by the beard of my grandfather, but it is a glorious vengeance. What was the brenning of Forres to this?—ha, ha, ha! Not a hole shall these corbies have to

hide their heads in. Every nest polluted by these stinking carrions shall be levelled. Such be the fate of those who dare to contend with the Wolfe of Badenoch! But have all escaped from this burning house? I would not have the hair of a human head singed—not a hair of a head, I tell ye. Didst thou see all escape them hence?"

"I did, my noble lord," replied one of his esquires, who had superintended the execution of this part of his commands; "with our own eyes did we see them, as we arrived, scour from the walls, like an army of mice from a hollow cheese."

"Ha! by my faith, but thou liest, villain," cried the Wolfe, turning hastily round, and levelling the speaker to the earth with one blow of his truncheon; "thou dost lie black as hell. By all that is unlucky, I did even now behold a female form at yonder window. Nay, now the smoke doth hide it; but—see, see—ha! why hath it been so, knaves? Did I not warn ye all that not a life should be tint?"

"Help, help, Lord Badenoch," cried the Lady Beatrice—"help, help, or I perish! The boards burn.—Help, help, for the love of mercy—for the love of the blessed Virgin, save me, save me!"

"By the holy mass, I should know that voice," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch: "nay, 'tis she indeed, or 'tis her wraith I do behold."

"'Tis some evil spirit, father," said Sir Andrew Stewart, who had accompanied his father in this expedition, not willingly, but because the Wolfe of Badenoch had resolved that he should have a share in it.

"Evil spirit!" cried the Wolfe, turning angrily round on him; "ha! 'tis thou who art the evil spirit, son Andrew. Thou darest not to look on her whom thou would'st have injured. But, by this hand, thou shalt. The damsel shall not perish, if I can help her. I will go rescue her, and thou, son Andrew, shalt follow me."

"Nay, try not anything so rash, father," exclaimed Sir Andrew Stewart, dreadfully alarmed to find that he was expected to participate in an attempt so desperate; "the whole body of the house is in flames."

"What, villain," cried the Wolfe indignantly; "so, thou could'st love the damsel to do her violence, and yet art base enow to shrink from the glorious achievement of saving her life, or perishing in the attempt. Unworthy whelp of the Wolfe of Badenoch! Dastard, dismount and in with me, or, by the blood of

the Bruce, the spears of my men-at-arms shall goad thee to it."—And saying so, he sprang from his horse, while Sir Andrew Stewart, though half dead with fear, was compelled to follow him with all the alertness that might have befitted a hero well stomached for the desperate undertaking.

"What, Andrew going thither!" cried Walter Stewart, leaping from his horse; "by this hand, but I shall in too then."

"And so shall I," cried James, following his brother's example.

"And by my beard that is to grow," cried the boy Duncan, "but I shall not be left behind."

"Nay, stay, Sir Duncan," cried an esquire. "By the mass, but he is in after the others; and what will my lord say if anything doth befall him? He loveth the boy more than all the rest put together. I'll in after him."—Upon which, the man rushed in, followed by a crowd of the others, who were equally afraid of the rage that might fall upon their heads for having permitted the boy to escape from them.

And now a terrible scene ensued. The crowd who entered soon wedged themselves in the narrow passages just within the doorway, so that they could neither advance nor retreat.

The smoke accumulated about them from the stoppage of its vent. They struggled and crushed, and poured out half-choked curses. Some fell, and were trampled under foot; and at length the voice of the Wolfe was heard from within——

"Ha! clear the passage, or I am suffocated; clear the passage, villains, or I will murder ye all."

The fear of their violent master did for them what they could not before accomplish. An unusual exertion on the part of those who were outermost extricated them from the doorway, and the passage being now less wedged, the force from within sent them all out headlong into the court, and out rushed the Wolfe, nearly spent by the continued suffocation he had endured.

"By all that is miraculous, I do believe that it was a spirit after all," said the Wolfe, half in soliloquy, as soon as he had gathered breath to speak; "I did make my way to the chamber where she did appear, and she was not there; nor was she anywhere else to be seen. Such tricks of fancy are often played by sprites. And how, after all, could she have been there—she who must be even now in Norham? But ha!" cried he aloud, "what figure is that I do

now behold in yonder hanging towernet, that doth blaze so fiercely?"

All eyes were now directed towards the spot he had indicated, and there, to the astonishment of every one, appeared the form of the Franciscan, brightly illumined by the jets of flame that surrounded it.

"Holy Virgin!" cried his followers, crossing themselves, "'tis a sprite—'tis a devil. Mercy on us, 'tis no monk, but something unholy," cried half a dozen voices.

The teeth of the stern Wolfe himself were heard to chatter as he gazed on his old enemy, of the reality of whose present appearance he almost doubted. The keen eyes and strongly expressive countenance of the Friar were now wildly distorted by the alarm which had seized him, on suddenly awaking from the deep sleep he had been plunged in, and finding himself surrounded by all the horrors of the most dreadful of deaths. A red and unearthly light was thrown on his features, and broadly illumined his tonsure, giving him a most terrific and ghastly look. It was therefore little to be wondered that even the hardy-minded Wolfe of Badenoch should have for an instant believed that it was the Devil he beheld.

"By all the fiends of hell, 'tis wonderful!" cried he, as he stood fixed in a kind of stupor.

"Help, help!" cried the Franciscan.

"Ha!" cried the Wolfe, recovering himself, "if thou be'st in very deed the chough Friar, bren, bren, and welcome. But if thou be'st the Devil, thou may'st well enow help thyself."

"Help, in mercy help!" cried the Franciscan; "a ladder, a ladder."

"A ladder!" cried the Wolfe, now sufficiently reassured, and becoming convinced that it really was the very Franciscan in true flesh who had so bearded him at Lochyndorbe, and no phantom nor demon. "Ha! prating chough, is it thee, in troth? A ladder, said'st thou? Thou could'st have lacked a ladder but for thy hanging, and now thou need'st it not, seeing thou art in the way of dying a better death."

"Help, help!" cried the unfortunate wretch, who seemed hardly to have yet gained a knowledge of those who were below.

"Help!" repeated the Wolfe; "by my trusty burlybrand, but I shall hew down the first villain who doth but move to give thee help. What, did I say that no hair of life should be touched? By the blessed bones of mine ancestors, but there lacked only this ac-

cident to make my revenge complete. Ha, ha, ha! did I not swear, thou grey-hooded crow, that as thou didst escape from the pit of water, thou should'st be tried next day by the fire?—By my head, I did little imagine that I should thus so soon see thee bren before mine eyes; and bren thou shalt, for no man of mine shall risk the singeing of his beard to pluck thee from the destruction thine atrocious tongue hath so well merited."

The monk disappeared for some moments, and soon afterwards, to the astonishment of all, was seen making his way along the roof, through volumes of flame and smoke. Every eye in the court below was turned towards him. It seemed impossible that anything but a demon could have clambered where he went. Again he was lost to their eyes, and anon he appeared in the very room which had been lately occupied by the Lady Beatrice. He shrieked out her name; was again invisible; and then, again, was seen in all the upper apartments, one after another. At last they saw him no longer.

"He is either the Devil himself, or he is brent by this time," whispered some of the awe-stricken followers of the Wolfe.

In an instant he again appeared on the top of the turret in which he had been first seen;

the flames arose everywhere around him; terrible was his aspect, and an involuntary shudder crept through the silent crowd.

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Lord of Badenoch," cried he, with an appalling voice, whilst he threw his arms abroad, in an attitude befitting the denunciation he was about to pour out—"the red hand of thine iniquity hath again lifted the firebrand of destruction but as thou hast kindled these holy piles dedicated to God, so shall the wrath of the Almighty be kindled against thee. The measure of thine iniquity is now full, and yonder flaming heavens do bear witness to thy crimes. Seest thou yonder fiery cloud that doth now float over thy devoted head? There sitteth the Angel of Vengeance, ready to descend on thee and thine. Prepare—for instant and direful punishment doth await thee."

The monk again disappeared. The Wolfe of Badenoch looked upwards to the sky, and beheld the fiery cloud that hung, as it were, over him. Fancy depicted in it a countenance, that looked down upon him in terrible ire. He gnashed his teeth, and his features blackened. At that moment shrieks arose from the higher chambers of the building.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!—let him die," cried the

Wolfe, clenching his fists, and laughing wildly; "let the villain die, I say."

The shrieks came again, and louder.

"Ha! what voice was that?" exclaimed the Wolfe, in an altered tone, and in considerable agitation.

"Help, help!" cried a voice, and a figure appeared at an upper window, in the midst of the flames.

"Oh God!" cried the Wolfe, in an agony, "my son, my son!—my dearest boy, Duncan! —Save him, save him—save my child!"

With the fury of a maniac, he rushed fearlessly towards the burning building. His people sprang after him. He had already reached the door-way, when the central stair fell with a tremendous crash within; and had not his followers dragged him back the instant before, he must have been crushed beneath the descending ruin.

"Father, father!" cried a piteous voice from the ground.

"Walter," cried the unhappy Wolfe of Badenoch, running to lift up his son, "what hath befallen thee?—Speak."

"I was knocked down and crushed by the men-at-arms as they rushed outwards," said the youth faintly; "I do feel as if I had tane some sore inward bruises."

"Merciful God!" cried the miserable father, removing his son farther from the danger: "But where is James?" demanded he, looking wildly about him.

"He also fell near me," said Walter.

The attendants now ran forward, and amongst several wounded people who lay on the pavement, they found and raised James Stewart, who was only known to be alive by his quick breathing. But the distracted father had little leisure to attend to either of these his wounded sons, and in an instant they were abandoned to the care of those about him; for the boy Duncan, his youngest and his darling child, the pride of his heart, was again heard to shriek from an upper window. The flames were rioting triumphantly within, and every possible approach to him was cut off.

"Ladders, ladders!" cried he, in a frenzy; and his people set off in hopeless search of what he called for.

"Ladders!" cried the Franciscan, with a voice like thunder, as he unexpectedly appeared behind the boy—"ladders! how dost thou dare to call for that help which thou didst refuse to yield to others? Now doth thy fiendish joy begin to be transmewed into mourning, thou accursed instrument in the hands of an incensed

God. Already do two of thy lawless brood lie on that pavement, to be carried home with thee to linger and die; and now this child, thy youngest and dearest, shall be lost to thee by a more speedy fate."—He caught up the boy in his sinewy arms with a savage laugh of triumph, and held him aloft with a gripe so powerful, that his puny efforts to escape were utterly hopeless. "Ha, ha, ha! now may I laugh in my turn," cried the Franciscan, with a yell that struck to the heart of the Wolfe of Badenoch, and subdued him at once.

"Mercy!" cried he, clasping his hands and wringing them together, and his breath came thick and laborious, so that he could hardly find utterance, as he looked up with stretched eye-balls, expecting every instant to behold the horrible spectacle of his best beloved son's destruction. "Mercy!—fiend!—ha!—Ladders, ladders!—Oh, mercy, mercy!—Oh, spare my boy!—Oh, mercy, mercy—mercy on my boy!" He sank down on his knees, his broad chest heaving to his very cuirass with its labouring respiration, and his lips moving, even after all power of utterance was denied him.

"Ha! mercy said'st thou?" cried the Franciscan, with a contemptuous smile and a glaring eye; "what, mercy to thee—to thee, who

hath no mercy!—mercy to thee, who hath incurred God's highest wrath!—mercy to thee, who hath wrapped all these holy buildings, and these dwellings of God's peaceful servants and people, in impious flames!—thou, who wert but now revelling in the hellish joy of thy daring sacrilege—mercy to thee!—mercy meanly begged, too, from him whom thou didst but this moment doom to the most cruel death! Ha, ha, ha! But my life or death is not in thy weak power to give or to withhold. My life will be preserved by him who gave it, that it may yet fulfil the purpose for which he did bestow it. Thy fate doth hang in my grasp, and the gripe which I do now hold of this frail fragment of thyself," continued he, lifting up the trembling boy in a terrific manner, "is but a symbol of the power which God hath given me over thee to force thee to repentance."

"Oh, spare, spare, spare!" cried the miserable Lord of Badenoch, bereft of all thought but of his son's fate.

The boy screamed for help, but the ruthless Franciscan laughed savagely, and then sprang backwards with him through the flames.

The wretched Lord of Badenoch remained fixed on his knees, his face still turned upwards, and his eyes fastened on the casement so lately

occupied by the figures of the Franciscan and his lost boy. It was now filled by a sheet of brilliant flame. His lips muttered, and "Mercy—oh, mercy!" were still the only words that escaped them. His followers crowded around him in dismay, the whole group being broadly illuminated by the fire, which had now gained complete mastery over the interior of the building.

CHAPTER XIII.

The wretched Wolfe of Badenoch was slowly raised by those who were about him; and he submitted, as if altogether unconscious of what they were doing. His features were immovable, and his eyes vacant, until they rested on his two sons, Walter and James, who lay wounded in the arms of his servants.

"Where is my son Andrew?" cried he, suddenly recovering the use of speech.

The attendants muttered to one another, but no one answered him.

"Speak, ye knaves," cried he, grinding his teeth, and at the same time springing on them, and seizing one of them in each hand by the throat; "villains, I will choke ye both with my grasp if ye answer me not."

"My noble lord," cried the men, terrified by his rage and his threats, "we saw him enter the burning building with thee, but none of us saw him issue thence."

"Villains, villains, tell me not so!" cried the Wolfe, shaking the two men from him, and sending them reeling away with such force that both were prostrated on the earth. "What, hath he too perished?—And it was I who did myself compel him thither!" and, saying so, he struck his breast, and moved about rapidly through the court, giving vent to a frenzy of self-accusation.

"Ha!" cried he, halting suddenly, as he heard the clang of horses' heels approaching; "who comes there?—Alexander—my son—thou art all that is left to me now;" and springing forward, he clasped the knees of Sir Alexander Stewart, who at that moment appeared, followed by the whole of his force.

"Why tarriest thou here, father?" demanded his son; "depardieux, but I have sought thee around all the glorious fires we have kindled. Little did I think to find thee here in this by-corner, looking on so paltry a glede as this, when the towers of the Cathedral do shoot out flames that pierce the heavens, and proclaim thy red vengeance on the Bishop of Moray, yea, even to his brother-mitred priest of Ross, even across the broad firths that so sunder them.—Come with me, I pray, and ride triumphant through the flaming streets, that our shouts may ring ter-

ribly in the craven corbie's ears, and reach him even where he doth hide him in his palace of Spynie.—But what aileth thee, father, that thou seemest so unmanned?"

"Alexander," cried the afflicted father, embracing his son, who stooped over him, "thy brethren have perished; Walter and James are there dying from their bruises, and Andrew and Duncan,—my beloved boy Duncan,—have perished in these flames."

"How, what! how hath this happened?" cried Sir Alexander, leaping from his horse and running to question the attendants who supported his two wounded brothers. From them he gathered a brief account of the events that had occurred, and for some moments gave way to the sorrow that afflicted his father.

"But why grieve we here, my lord?" cried he suddenly; "of a truth, whatever woe hath befallen us, hath but come by reason of that ill-starred enemy of our house, Bishop Barr, who has driven us to the desperation out of which all these evils have arisen. He and his accursed flock of ill-omened crows have flown to the refuge of his palace of Spynie. Rouse, my noble father, and let us gallop thither and seek a sweet revenge by pulling the choughs from their nests."

"Right, son Alexander," cried the Wolfe, his native temper being so far roused for the moment by this speech, that he shook off the torpor that had come upon him, and sprang into his saddle, "by this beard, but thou dost say right. 'Tis indeed that accursed Priest-Bishop who hath embittered the whole stream of my life, and hath now been the cause of hurling all this misery upon me. Alas, my poor boys!—But, by the blood of the Bruce, they shall be avenged.—I shall take thy counsel, my son—My son, said I?—Alas, Alexander, thou wilt soon, I fear, be mine only son.—Dost hear, Sir Squire?" said he, turning fiercely to one of his attendants, "See that thou dost take care of my wounded boys. Take people enow with thee, and see that they be promptly and tenderly carried on men's shoulders to Lochyndorbe—Dost thou mark me?—Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy neglect of the smallest tittle of thy duty."

"Ay," cried Sir Alexander Stewart, "our business, I trow, will soon be sped, and we shall overtake them before they shall have gone many miles of the way."

"Come, then, Alexander, let's to Spynie," cried the Wolfe, and then turning again to the

esquire—" But take care of my boys, and see that they be gently borne."

" On, brave spears," cried Sir Alexander; " ye shall have work peraunter to do anon."

Out dashed the Wolfe of Badenoch, gnashing his teeth, as if to wind himself up to desperation, yet rather led than followed by Sir Alexander Stewart, and away rattled about two hundred well-armed and well-mounted men-at-arms at their backs, leaving behind them a sufficient force to escort the wounded youths homeward in safety. There were but few among the troops that would not have willingly staid behind. They liked not this ungodly warfare, and although they witnessed the execution of the Wolfe of Badenoch's fell fury on the holy edifices, done by a few of the less scrupulous ministers of his vengeance, they felt conscience-stricken at the sight, and this feeling had not been diminished by the denunciations of the Franciscan, the direful fate of the boy Duncan Stuart, and of his brother Sir Andrew, and that which had befallen the youths Walter and James, of whose recovery there seemed to be but little hope.

The palace of Spynie offered then but a wretched defence against any assailant who might choose to attack it, for it was not till the

following century that it was so strengthened as to enable Bishop David Stuart* to defy the proud Earl of Huntly. The buildings, indeed, were surrounded by a wall; but trusting to that awe which the sacred dignity of the possessor was calculated to inspire, the wooden gate was left unprotected by any portcullis of iron. It, therefore, promised to be easily assailable by the sledge-hammers which had been found so useful in furthering the work of destruction they had already accomplished.

The Wolfe of Badenoch, hurried on by his son, swept over the gentle eminence lying between the town and the palace, and as the distance was but a mile, his excitement had had hardly time to expend itself, ere he found himself approaching the walls. The lurid red vault of the sky reflected a dim light, which might have been sufficient to enable them to discover the building before them. But, independently of this, the summit of the outer walls

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* Having some debates with the Earl of Huntly, he laid him under ecclesiastical censure, which so provoked the Gordons that they threatened to pull the Bishop out of his pigeon-holes. "I will build a house," said the Bishop, "out of which neither the Earl nor his clan shall pull me," and he accordingly erected that strong tower still known by the name of Davy's Tower. Even the present walls were of date posterior to that alluded to in the text.

was lined by a number of torches, which began to flit about hastily, as soon as the thundering sound of the horses' feet reached those who carried them.

"The place doth seem to be already alarmed," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, as they advanced, his resolute soul shaken by his recent calamities. "These lights are not wont to appear on the grass-grown walls of these mass-ensconced priests. Thou shalt halt here, Sir Alexander, and let me advance alone to reconnoitre. I cannot, I wis, afford to peril the life of thee, whom my fears do tell me I may now call mine only son."

"Peril my life!" cried Sir Alexander, indignantly; "what, talkest thou of peril, when we have but these carrion crows to deal with? I trow there be garrison enow of them, sith that all their rookeries, grey, black, and hooded, have doubtless gathered there to-night. By my knighthood, but it doth almost shame me to attack them with harness on my back, or men-at-arms at my heels—And see, the lights have disappeared.—Never trust me, but those who did flourish them have fled into the deepest cellar of the place, at the very tramp of our war-steeds."

"Nay, but, son Alexander," repeated the

Wolfe, "I do command thee to halt; thou shalt not advance until I shall have first——Where hath he vanished?" cried the Wolfe, losing sight of him for a moment in the dark. "Ha! there he speeds him to the gate," and leaping from his saddle, he launched himself after his son. Sir Alexander had snatched a sledge-hammer from some one near him, and was already raising it to strike the first blow at the gate, when his right arm fell shattered and nerveless by his side, and he was crushed to the earth by some unseen power. The Wolfe of Badenoch reached his son but to raise him up in his arms. At that moment a broad blaze arose on the top of the wall, immediately over the gateway, in front of which the Wolfe of Badenoch stood appalled by the apparition it illumined; and he grew deadly pale when he beheld the figure of the Franciscan, of that very friar whom he believed nothing but superhuman power could have saved from the flames of the Maison Dieu, again presented before his eyes. The attitude of the Monk was fearfully commanding. He reared a large crucifix in his left hand, whilst the other was stretched out before him. The light by which he was encircled shot around him to a great distance, showing the walls thickly manned with crossbow-men pre-

pared to shoot upon the assailants, and exhibiting these assailants themselves with their faces turned towards what they believed to be a miraculous vision, which filled them with a terror that no merely human array could have awakened.

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Lord of Badenoch," cried the Franciscan, in his wonted clear but solemn voice, "have I not told thee that the Omnipotent hath resigned thee and thine into my grasp for penance or for punishment?—Go, take thy wounded son with thee, sith that thou hast sought this fresh affliction. His life and the lives of those who are now borne to thy den hang on thy repentance."

A hissing sound was heard,—a dense vapour arose,—and all was again dark as before. Some of the Wolfe of Badenoch's terrified attendants ventured to approach the gate to assist him. They carried Sir Alexander away; and the ferocious Earl, again subdued from the high wrath to which his son's sudden excitation had for a moment raised his native temper, relapsed into that apathetical stupor from which he had been roused. He seemed to know not what he was doing, or where he was;—but mechanically mounting his horse, he retired from the walls of Spynie, and took his way slowly homewards.

As the distant conflagration flashed from time to time on his face, he started and looked towards it with wild expression—and then elevated his eye towards his son, who was carried on a bier formed of crossed lances, by some men on foot; but excepting when he was so moved, his features were like those of the stone effigy which now lies stretched upon his tomb.

The Bishop, and the dignitaries of the Cathedral who composed his Chapter, had assembled in fear and trembling in the chapel of the palace, where they offered up prayers for deliverance from their scourge; and the Wolfe of Badenoch and his formidable party, were no sooner ascertained to have permanently withdrawn, than they issued forth, bearing some of the most holy of their images, with the most precious relics of saints, which had been hastily snatched from their shrines on the first alarm of the enemy's approach, and began to move in melancholy procession towards Elgin, guarded by the armed vassals of the church, who had been summoned to man the palace walls. As they rose over the hill, they beheld the flames still raging in all their fury. The sun was by this time rising over the horizon, but his rays added little to the artificial day that already possessed the scene. The smiling morning, indeed,

served to show the extent of the devastation which the flames had already occasioned; but the cheerful matin song of the birds accorded ill with the wailings that burst from those who beheld this dismal spectacle. The pride of the Bishop, if the good man ever had any, was indeed effectually humbled. As he rode on his palfrey at the head of the sad procession, the reins held by two attendants, one of whom walked on each side of him, he wept when he came within view of the town; and ordering them to halt, he crossed his hands meekly over his breast, and looked up in silent ejaculation to Heaven.

"*O speculum patriæ et decus regni,*" cried he, turning his eyes again towards the Cathedral, whilst the tears rolled over his cheeks; "Oh, glory and honour of Scotland—thou holy fane, which we, poor wretched mortals, did fondly believe to be a habitation worthy of the omnipotent and mysterious Trinity to whom thou wast dedicated—behold thee, for the sins of us the guilty servants of a just God, behold thee yielded up a prey to the destroyer!—Oh, holy Father—and do thou, blessed Virgin Mother, cause our prayers to find acceptance at the Almighty throne, through the merits of thy beloved son—may we, thy sinful creatures, be

humbled before this thine avenging arm; and may the fasts, penances, and mortifications, we shall impose, be the means of bringing us down, both body and soul, unto the dust, that thy just wrath against us may be assuaged; for surely some great sin hath beset us, seeing it hath pleased thee to destroy thine own holy temple, that our evil condition might be made manifest to us."

Those who formed the procession bent reverently to the ground, as the venerable prelate uttered these words.

"And now, my sons," said he with a sigh, "let us hasten onwards, and do what we can to preserve what may yet have escaped from the general destruction."

The first care of the good Bishop was to collect the scattered townsmen, who had already begun to cluster in the streets; and every exertion was immediately used to put a stop to the conflagration. The Franciscan was there, but his attention was occupied with something very different from that which so painfully interested every one else. The Lady Beatrice—was she safe? At the risk of his life, he had clambered over the blazing roof of the Maison Dieu to seek her in her chamber. She was gone from thence. He had searched anxiously through all

the upper apartments of the building, and yet he had seen no trace of her. Full of alarm, he had been compelled to rest on the hope that she might have escaped with others from the flames;—and with an unspeakable anxiety to have that hope confirmed, he went about inquiring impatiently of every one he met, whether any damsel, answering to the description of the Lady Beatrice, had been seen; but of all those to whom he addressed himself, there was none who could say that she was known to have escaped.

"Miserable wretch that I am," said he, "have her sins then been punished by so terrible a death?—sins for the which I myself must be called to dread account both here and hereafter—I who deprived her of the blessing of a virtuous mother's counsel, and of a father's powerful protection.—Holy St Francis forgive me, the thought is agony."

He sat him down on a stone in the court of the Maison Dieu, and he was soon joined by sister Marion, the lame house-keeper of the Hospital, who came to mourn over its smouldering ruins.

"Oh, dear heart and alas," cried the withered matron—"the blessed St Mary defend, protect, and be good unto us—and there is a dolesome sight to be sure. Under that very roof ha'e

I been housed and sheltered, come the feast of Our Lady, full forty——nay, I should ha'e said fourteen years and upwards, and now I am to be turned out amidst the snares and temptations of this wicked world, to be the sport and the pastime of the profligate and ungodly. What will become of us, to whose lot beauty hath fallen as a snare, and fair countenances as an aid to the evil one? Where, alas, shall we hide our heads that we fall not in the way of sinners?—Where——"

"Tell me, sister!" cried the Franciscan, impatiently interrupting her—"tell me, didst thou see the Lady Beatrice, whom I escorted hither yesterday?"

"Yea, in good verity, did I that, brother," replied Marion.

"Where?—where and when?" cried the anxious Franciscan.

"Nay, be not in such a flurry, brother," replied she. "I did first see her in the refectory, when thou didst bring her there, and a pretty damsel she be, I trow."

"Nay, but didst thou see her after the fire?" demanded the Franciscan.

"In very deed, nay, brother," replied the literal sister Marion.

"Wretch that I am," cried the Franciscan, in an agony of suspense, "hath then no one seen her escape?"

"St Katherine help us, an thou dost talk of her escape, indeed, thou comest to the right hand in me," replied she, "sith that it was I myself who did show her how to escape; but that was neither before nor after the fire, I promise thee, but in the very height of the brenning, when the flames were bursting here, and crackling there,—and the rafters——"

"Nay, tell me, I entreat thee, sister," cried the Franciscan, interrupting her, though greatly relieved,—"tell me how and where she did save herself?"

"But I do tell thee thou art wrong, brother," cried the peevish old woman, "for it was in no such ways,—seeing, as I said before, it was I myself that did save her. But thou art so flustrificacious; an thou would'st but let me tell mine own tale——"

"Go on then, I pray thee, sister Marion," cried the Monk, curbing his ire, and patiently resuming his seat upon the stone; "take thine own way."

"In good troth, my way is the right way," replied sister Marion. "Well, as I was a-saying, I was sound asleep in my bed, in the back turret

at the end of the passage, when cometh the Lady Beatrice to my room, and doth shake, shake at me; and up did I start, for luckily for me I had taken an opiate, tincture, or balsam, the which the good cellarer doth give me ofttimes for the shooting toothach pain (but, alas, I doubt it be all burnt now), and so I had somehow lain down in my clothes; and then came the cries of people, and the smoke and flame,—and so I did bethink me straightway of the nun's private stair to the chapel, the which did lead down from my very door. This I did enter, and bid the Lady Beatrice follow me. But I being rather lame, and the stair being fit only for one at a time, she did sorely hurry and hasten me; and methought we should never ha'e gotten down to the chapel. Aweel, as we were crossing the chapel to make our way out at the door that doth lead into the garden, who should I see coming down the steps of the main-stair that doth lead from yonder passage on the ground floor into the chapel, but Sir Andrew Stewart, the son of the Wolfe of Badenoch himself. Trust me, I staid not long. But if the Lady Beatrice did complain of my delay in the way down thither, I trow she had reason in sooth to think me liard enow in leaving it. I was gone in a trice ere she did miss

me; for of a truth I had no fancy to fall into such hands, since who doth know what——"

"And the Lady Beatrice?" interrupted the Franciscan.

"Nay, I must confess I did see him lay his hands on her," answered Marion; "and I did see him behind me as I did flee through the garden. But——"

"Then is all well," interrupted the Franciscan, turning away from the fatiguing old woman, and finishing the rest of his speech in grateful soliloquy. "It doth rejoice me much that she hath fallen into the hands of Sir Andrew Stewart; for albeit the Wolfe of Badenoch hath wrought so much evil, verily I have myself seen that he is no enemy to the Lady Beatrice. And then, Sir Andrew Stewart hath the reputation of being the best of his family,—one who is a mirror of virtue and of peaceful gentleness; a perfect lamb of patience, in that ferocious litter of wild beasts. Even our holy Bishop hath him in favourable estimation. He could not choose but take especial care of her. Praised be the Virgin, I may now go about the Bishop's affairs withouten care, being sure that I shall hear good tidings of her anon."

All that day and night, and all the following day, had passed away,—the flames had been

partly extinguished by active exertion, and had partly expired from lack of further food,—and much had doubtless been done by the influence of images and relics. Measures also had been taken to preserve the quiet and peace of the town, as well as to ensure the immediate accommodation and support of such of its inhabitants as had suffered in the general calamity. Penitential prayers had been offered up, and hymns chanted in the conventual churches and chapels which had not suffered. A general penance and solemn fast had been ordered,—after all which the Bishop sent for the Franciscan and held a long conference with him, on the subject of the affairs of the church, which we shall leave them to discuss together, that we may now follow the humbled Wolfe of Badenoch to Lochyndorbe.

CHAPTER XIV.

The scene within that fortress was materially changed since our last visit to it. The boys, Walter and James Stewart, were laid in beds from which there was but small hope of their ever rising. Sir Alexander Stewart also lay in a very dangerous and distressing state, with a shattered arm and a bruised body, resulting from the heap of heavy stones which had been thrown down upon him from the wall of Spynie; and the hitherto hardy and impregnable mind and body of the Wolfe of Badenoch himself, yielding before the storm of calamity that had so suddenly assailed him, had sunk into a state of torpor, and he was now confined to a sick-bed by a low, yet rapidly consuming fever. In so short a time as two days, his gigantic strength was reduced to the weakness of a child. His impatience of temper had not been entirely conquered by the disease, but its effects were sufficiently moderated by his prostration, to render

him no longer a terror to any one; and this feeling was heightened in all around him, by the conviction that his malady was of a nature so fatal, that his existence must soon be terminated.

The Lady Mariota was one of the first who became aware of this, and she prudently regulated her conduct accordingly. Yes, she for whose illicit love he had sacrificed so much—she who had ever affected so devoted an attachment to him—she who was the mother of his five boys—she on whose account he had so resolutely braved so many tempests, and who had been the original cause of the very feud with the Bishop of Moray, which had led to the commission of excesses so outrageous, and now produced so much fatal affliction—she it was who, now beginning to show herself in her true character, sorrowed not for him, but as her own importance and high estate must inevitably sink in his deathbed. Even her grief for her lost sons, and her anxiety for those whom she feared to lose, arose more from the thought that in them perished so many supporters and protectors, who might yet have enabled her to hold her head proudly, than from any of that warm and perfectly unselfish feeling, which, if it anywhere exists, must be found to throb in the bosom of a mother. Instead of flying in distrac-

tion from couch to couch, administering all that imagination could think of, to heal, to support, or to soothe, she wisely remembered that, in her situation, time was precious; and, accordingly, she employed every minute of it in rummaging through the secret repositories of many a curious antique cabinet, and in making up many a neat and portable package, to be carried off the moment that the soul of the Wolfe of Badenoch should quit his body. Nor were her active thoughts bestowed upon things inanimate, or within doors only; her tender care soared even beyond the Castle-walls and the Loch that encircled them; and by means of a chosen few of her own servants, whom she had managed to secure by large bribes to her especial interest, the surrounding country was raised, and the cattle and sheep that fed in the lawndes of the forests for many a mile round, were seen pouring in large bodies towards the land-sconce, to be ready to accompany her, and to unite their lowings and bleatings to her wailings, when she should be compelled to take her sad departure from Lochyndorbe.

Nor was the knowledge of this base ingratitude spared to the dying man. She had not visited him for the greater part of a day. He called, but the hirelings, who were wont to fly to him ere the words had well passed his lips,

were now glad to keep out of his sight, and each abandoning to the rest the unwelcome task of waiting on him, he was left altogether without help. He was parched with a thirst which he felt persuaded the Loch itself would have hardly quenched, and in the disturbed state of his nerves he was haunted with the eternal torture of the idea of its waves murmuring gently and invitingly around him. It was night. A light step entered his room cautiously, and the rays of a lamp were seen. He entreated for a cup of water, but no answer was returned to his request. At length his impatience gave him a momentary command over his muscles, and throwing down the bed-clothes, he sprang on his knees, and opened wide the curtains that shaded the lower end of his bed. By the light of the lamp he beheld the Lady Mariota occupied in searching through his private cabinet, whence she had already taken many a valuable, the table being covered with rich chains of gold, and sparkling gems of every variety of water and colour, set in massive rings, buckles, brooches, collars, and head-circlets; and so intently was she busied, that she heard not his motion.

"Ha, wretch," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, in a hollow and sepulchral voice of wasted dis-

ease; "the curse of my spirit upon thee. What dost thou there?"

The Lady Mariota gave him not time to add more, for looking fearfully round, she beheld the gaunt visage of the Wolfe of Badenoch, with his eyes glaring fiercely upon her; and believing that he had already died, and that it was indeed his spirit which cursed her, she uttered a loud scream, and rushed in terror from the apartment. The Wolfe, exhausted by the unnatural exertion he had made, sunk backwards in his bed, and lay for some time motionless and unable to speak.

"Oh for a cup of water," moaned the miserable man at length, the excruciating torture of his thirst banishing even that which his mind had experienced in beholding so unequivocal a proof of the Lady Mariota's selfish and unfeeling heart; "oh, will no one bring me a cup of water? And hath it then come so soon to this, that I, the son of a King, am left to suffer this foretaste of hell's torments, and no one hand to help me? Oh, water, water, water, for mercy's sake. Alas, Heaven's curse hath indeed fallen upon me. My dead and dying sons cannot help me; and Mariota—ha! fiends, fiends! Ay, there is bitterness—venom—black poison. Was it for this," said he, casting his eyes towards

the glittering jewels on the distant table; "was it for a heart so worthless that I did so brave the curse of the church? Was it for such a viper that I did incur my father's anger? Was it for a poison-puffed spider like this that I did do deeds that made men's hair bristle on their heads, and their very eyes grow dim? Did I bear her fiercely up before a chiding world, that she might turn and sting me at an hour like this?—Ha! punishment, dread punishment, was indeed promised me; but I looked not that it should come from her whom I did so long love and cherish—from her for whom I have sacrificed peace in this life, and—oh, worse than all—mercy in that to which I am hastening." He shuddered at the thoughts which now crowded on his mind, and buried his head for some moments under the bed-clothes.

It now approached midnight, and the solitary lamp, left by the Lady Mariota, was still burning in the apartment, when his ear caught a rustling noise.

"Ha, Mariota, art there again?" cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, impatiently lifting up his head.

He looked, and through the drapery of the bed, that still remained wide open, he beheld the Franciscan standing before him.

"Ha, what! merciful St Andrew," cried

the Wolfe; "ha, is it thou, fiend, from whom hath sprung all mine affliction? Devil or monk, thou shalt die in my grasp." He made a desperate effort to rise, and repeated it again and again; but he sank down nerveless, his breast heaving with agitation, and his eyes starting wildly from their sockets. "Speak, demon, what farther vengeance dost thou come to execute on this devoted head? Speak, for what fiendish torment canst thou invent that shall more excruciate the body than racking and unsatisfied thirst? or what that shall tear the soul more cruelly than the barbed arrows of ingratitude? Hence, then, to thy native hell, and leave me to mine."

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Lord of Badenoch," said the Franciscan, "I do come to thee as no tormenting fiend. The seal of death doth seem to be set on thy forehead; thou art fast sinking into his fleshless arms. The damps of the grave do gather on thy brow. 'Tis not for mortal man, as I am, to push vengeance at such an hour. When thou wert in thy full strength and power, I did boldly face thy wickedness; but now that thou art feeble and drivelling as the child that was born yesterday, or as the helpless crone over whose worn head and wasted brain an hundred winters have rolled,

I come not to denounce aught of punishment against thee; for already hast thou enow here, and thou wilt soon be plunged for endless ages in that burning sea, to which it were bootless for me to add one drop of anguish. Forgetting all thy cruelty against myself, I do come to thee as the hand of Mercy to the drowning wretch. I come to offer myself as the leech of thy soul as well as of thy body; and, as an offering of peace, and a pledge of my sincerity, behold thy beloved son."

The Franciscan threw aside the folds of his habit, with which he had hitherto concealed something he carried, and he held up the smiling boy Duncan Stewart.

"Mock me not, foul fiend," cried the frantic father, believing that what he saw was a phantom; "hence, and disturb not my brain."

"Again I repeat, I am no fiend," said the Franciscan mildly. "I come to tell thee that repentance may yet ensure thee salvation in the next world, nay, even life in this; yea, and life also to thy sons: and as a gracious earnest of God's infinite mercy, behold I here restore thee thy best beloved boy, the Benjamin of thy heart, whose life mine hand did save from that raging fire thyself did so impiously kindle."

The Wolfe of Badenoch devoured the very words of the Franciscan as he spake. He gazed

wildly on him and on his boy alternately, as if he yet doubted the reality of the scene; and it was not until the little Duncan's joyous laugh rang in his ears, and he felt the boy's arms fondly entwining his neck, that he became satisfied of the truth of what he heard and saw. He was no longer the iron-framed and stern-souled Wolfe of Badenoch; his body was weak and his mind shaken, and he sank backwards in the bed, giving way to an hysterical laugh.

"Oh, my boy, my boy," cried he at length, smothering the youth with his caresses; "my beloved Duncan, what can I do for so great a mercy? What—what—but—Oh, mercy, one cup of water in mercy!—I burn—my tongue cleaveth—Oh, water, water, in mercy!"

The Franciscan hastened to give him water; and the thirsty wretch snatched the cup of life from the hand of him whom his unbridled rage had so wantonly consigned to the cruelest of deaths.

"More, more," cried the impatient Wolfe of Badenoch; "mine entrails do crack with the scorching heat within me."

"Drink this, then," said the Franciscan, taking a phial from his bosom, and pouring part of its contents into the cup; "drink this, and thou shalt have water."

"Ha!" cried the Wolfe, darting a glance of suspicion towards the monk. "Yet why should I hesitate?" continued he, as his eyes fell upon Duncan. "He who hath restored my son, can have little wish to hasten the end of a dying wretch."

"And he who might have used the dagger against thee," said the Franciscan calmly, "would never have thought of giving thee a death so tedious as that of poison. Drink; there is health in the cup."

The Wolfe hesitated no longer.

"Now water, oh, water, in mercy," cried he again, after he had swallowed the drug.

"Thy thirst must be moderately ministered unto for a time," said the Franciscan; "yet shalt thou have one cup more," and he poured one for him accordingly.

"Why art thou thus alone, father?" demanded the boy Duncan; "why is not my mother here? she who doth ever so caress and soothe thee, if that the pulses of thy temples do but throb unreasonably. I'll go and fetch her hither straightway."

"Fetch her not hither, Duncan, if thou wouldst not have me curse her," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, dashing away the half-consumed cup of water, in defiance of his thirst.

"Oh, that I might yet be myself again, were it but for a day, that I might deal justice upon her. Then, indeed, should I die contented."

"Hush," said the Franciscan; "such is not the temper that doth best befit a dying man; yea, and one, too, who hath so much for the which to ask forgiveness. It doth more behove thee to think of thine own sins than of those of others. If it may so please Heaven, I shall be the leech of thy body; but it were well that thou didst suffer me to give blessed medicine to thy diseased soul, for thy life or thy death hangeth in the Almighty hand, and no one can tell how soon thou mayest be called to thy great account. Say, dost thou repent thee of all the evil thou hast wrought against the Holy Church and her sacred ministers?"

"I do, I do; most bitterly do I repent me," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, grinding his teeth ferociously, and with an expression of countenance very different from that becoming an humble penitent. "I do repent me, I say, in gall and bitterness; for verily she for whom I did these deeds——"

"Nay, talk not of her," said the Franciscan, interrupting him; "mix not up thine angry passions with thine abasement before thine offended Maker. Repent thee of thy sins,—make

instant reparation to the church from the abundance of thy wealth,—resolve to put away all thine abominations from thee,—and, finally, make a solemn vow, that if it should please Heaven to restore thee to health, thou wilt do such penance as it may seem fitting for the injured Bishop of Moray to impose upon thee;—do these things, and all may yet be well with thee. If thou art willing to vow solemnly to do these things, if Heaven in its mercy shall yet spare thee, verily I will receive and be witness to thy serment; and I do beseech thee to speak quickly, for I would fain leave thee to that healing repose, for the which my medicine hath prepared thee, that I may go to give healthful balsams to thy three sons, that they may yet be snatched from an early grave."

"Yea, most merciful and beneficent monk," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, "thou whom I did believe to be a fiend, but whom I do now find to be a saint upon earth, most gladly do I yield me to thee. I here most solemnly vow to the Virgin and the Holy Trinity, that I do heartily repent me of mine outrages against the Holy Church of God and his holy ministers; that I am ready to make what reparation I may; and that, if it so please Heaven to rescue me from the jaws of death, I shall do penance in such

wise as to the Bishop and the King, my father, may seem best."

"Be thy vow registered in Heaven," said the Franciscan, solemnly crossing himself. "And now, with the blessing of St Francis, thou shalt soon be in a state for fulfilling it. But let me entreat thee to yield thyself to that repose, the which the healing draught thou hast taken must speedily ensure to thee; when thou dost again awake, thy consuming fever will have left thee, and in two or three days at most, thou mayest be again in thy saddle. Let me now hasten to help thy sons."

The boy Duncan Stewart had already paved the way for the Franciscan's favourable reception with his brothers, who gladly submitted themselves to his directions, and he speedily administered to their respective cases. The domestics now began to be re-assured of the probable recovery of the invalids, and they already quaked for the returning wrath of the Wolfe of Badenoch. The Lady Mariota sat trembling in her apartment. The Franciscan, who had formerly disappeared so miraculously, and who now re-appeared so strangely among them, was eyed with fear by every one within the Castle, and his orders were obeyed as implicitly and as promptly as those of the Wolfe himself, so that

he lacked for nothing that his patient required. Having done all for them that art could effect, he had time to think of the Lady Beatrice, whom he believed to be an inmate of the Castle, seeing he had no doubt that Sir Andrew Stewart must have brought her thither. But he found, on inquiry, that the knight had not appeared. He was vexed at the disappointment, but taking it for granted that her protector had carried her to some other fastness belonging to his father, he felt no uneasiness, trusting that he should soon have tidings of her.

Dismissing all thoughts of the Lady Beatrice, therefore, from his mind, he devoted himself eagerly to the restoration of the sick, being filled with the idea of the signal service he was about to perform to the Church, the extent of which would much depend on the recovery of those who now lay in so precarious a state, that they might appear before the world as living instances of penitence. For two days, then, he was indefatigable in his attentions; and the effect of his care and skill was, that the Wolfe of Badenoch's cure was rapid. His disease had been chiefly caused by sudden affliction, operating on an impatient temper, and a conscience ill at ease. The Franciscan's words, therefore, had happily combined with his medicines to produce an al-

most miraculous effect; and ere the time promised by the monk was expired, he appeared in the great hall, haggard and disease-worn indeed, but perfectly ready to fill his saddle. The recovery of his sons, though there was now little to be feared for them, promised to be more tedious; and it was well for the peace of the Castle of Lochyndorbe that it was so, for they might have made some objections to the decided step which their father took the moment he again showed himself.

"Ha, villains," cried he, as he came stalking through the opening crowd of domestics, that shrunk from him on either hand—"so, the Earl of Buchan, the son of a King, mought have died for all ye cared. Ha! whither did ye all hide, knaves, that I was nearly perishing of thirst, and no one to give me a cup of water? But 'tis no marvel that ye should have forgotten your master when—Ha! Bruce—send Bruce the old esquire hither. What mighty lowing of cattle, and bleating of sheep, is that I do hear?"

The domestics looked at each other, but no one dared to speak. The impatient Wolfe hurried up a little turret-stair, from the top of which he had a view over the outer walls of the Castle, and the narrow strait that divided them

from the mainland. There he beheld the whole of the flocks and herds which the Lady Mariota had so prudently collected together, and which her trepidation had made her forget to order to be driven again to their native hills and forests. He wanted no further information, for the truth flashed on him at once. His eye reddened, his cheek grew paler than even the disease had left it, his lip quivered, and he rushed precipitately down to the hall.

"Where, in the fiend's name, is Bruce?" cried he. "Ha! thou art there, old man. Get thee quickly together some dozen or twain of mounted spears, with palfreys for the Lady Mariota and her women, and sumpter-horses needful for the carriage of their raiment; and let her know that it is my will she do forthwith depart hence with thee for my Castle of Cockle-craig, the which is to be her future place of sojournance."

The esquire bowed obediently, and hastened to execute the command of his impatient lord. In a little time a page appeared, with an humble message from the Lady Mariota, to know whether the Earl was to accompany her into Buchan.

"Tell her, no," replied the Wolfe, turning round on the frightened page, and speaking

with a voice that shook the Gothic hall, which he was rapidly measuring backwards and forwards with his paces.

Again a woman came to him from the Lady Mariota, most submissively entreating for an interview.

"Nay, the red fiend catch me then!" cried the furious Wolfe, his eyes flashing fire; "I do already know too much of her baseness, ever to trust myself with a sight of her again. 'Twere better, for her sake, that she urge me not to see her. Ha! tell her I have sworn by my knighthood, that the threads that hath bound my heart to her worthlessness shall be for ever snapped. Let not the poisonous toad cross my path, lest I crush her in mine ire, and give to my conscience another sin to be repented of.—Away!"

The Wolfe again paced the hall, very much moved. The neighing of horses, and the noise of preparation, were heard in the court-yard; the warder's call for the boats sounded across the lake; and a wailing of women's voices soon afterwards succeeded. The Wolfe paced the hall with a yet more rapid step; he became much moved, and hid his face from the Franciscan, who was the only witness of his agitation. But at last it became too strong to be concealed, and he rushed up the turret-stair, whence he had

before looked out towards the land-sconce. He remained absent for a considerable time; and when he returned, his face was deeply marked with the traces of the strong contending emotions he had undergone.

"How doth thy leech-craft prosper, good Sir Friar?" demanded he at length, evidently from no other desire than to talk away his present feelings, seeing that he had already put the same question more than half a dozen times before.

"I do trust, that, under God, thy sons will yet be well," replied the Franciscan. "But be not impatient, my lord; their cure must be the work of time. Meanwhile, be thankful to a merciful Providence, who doth thus restore to thee all those of whom thou didst fear thou wert bereft."

"All!" cried the Wolfe, shuddering, "nay, not all; all but Andrew, and he did perish horribly in the flames of the Maison Dieu, whither I did myself enforce him. Heaven in its mercy pardon me!"

"Andrew!" cried the Franciscan, with surprise; "trust me, my lord, Sir Andrew Stewart is safe."

"Safe!" cried the Wolfe, clasping his hands together in an ecstacy—"then thanks be to a

merciful God, who hath saved me from the torturing thought of having been the cause of working my son's death. But where, I pray thee, was he seen?" demanded the Wolfe eagerly.

"He was seen in the chapel of the Maison Dieu with a lady, whom he did thereafter lead through the garden of the hospital," replied the Franciscan.

"What, the Lady Beatrice?" demanded the Wolfe; "for that is all the name I did ever know her to bear as a woman, albeit I do well recollect her masculine appellation of Maurice de Grey."

"The same," replied the Franciscan.

"Then hath Andrew preserved her life," replied the Wolfe. "By the beard of my grandfather, but I do greatly rejoice to hear it. There is still some virtue in the caitiff after all. My efforts to save the lady were vain; I did even gain her chamber, but I found her gone; from which I was compelled with grief to believe that she had surely perished. But whither hath my son Andrew conveyed her?"

"Nay, that I have not yet discovered," replied the Franciscan; "but Sir Andrew Stewart saved not the Lady Beatrice from the flames. One of the sisters of the hospital did teach her how to escape; and as they crossed the chapel

together, Sir Andrew Stewart, who had fled thither for safety——"

"Ah, coward," cried the Wolfe; "so, after all, he was the craven kestrel. By my beard, I thought as much. And so thou sayest that thou art yet ignorant where the Lady Beatrice hath been bestowed?"

"Nay, my good lord," replied the Franciscan; "but with a knight of his good report she is sure of protection, and——"

"What sayest thou?—good report, sayest thou?" interrupted the Wolfe. "Though he be a brauncher from mine own nest, yet must I, in honesty, tell thee, Sir Friar, that a greater hypocrite presseth not the surface of the earth. Protection, saidst thou? By St Barnabas, but she hath already had enow of his protection."

"What dost thou mean, my lord?" replied the monk, in astonishment.

"Why, by my knighthood, but I am ashamed to speak so of mine own son," replied the Wolfe; "yet am I bound to treat thee with candour, and so thou shalt e'en have it." And he proceeded to give the monk a short history of the infamous treachery of Sir Andrew Stewart towards the Lady Beatrice.

"My Lord of Buchan," cried the Franciscan, with an agitation and earnestness of manner

which the Wolfe of Badenoch could by no means explain, "if I have found favour with thee, lend me thine aid, I entreat thee, to recover the Lady Beatrice from thy son. She is destined to take the veil, and in giving me thine aid to reclaim her, thou wilt be doing a pious duty, the which will assuredly tell for the good of thy soul, yea, and help to balance the heavy charge of thine iniquities."

"Right joyfully shall I give thee mine aid," replied the Wolfe of Badenoch; "the more, that she was the lady of the gallant Sir Patrick Hepborne, with whom she was here, in the disguise of a page.—Ha, ha, ha, ha!—But wherefore doth she now take the veil?"

"'Tis fitting that she should atone for a youth of sin by a life of penitence," replied the Friar, unwilling to speak more plainly.

"So," said the Wolfe of Badenoch, with a significant look, "after all her modest pretence, and after all Sir Patrick's cunning dissembling, 'twas as I did suspect, then, after all?"

"Thou didst suspect, then?" said the Friar; "alas, I do fear with too much reason. Yet let us not tarry, but hasten to recover her, I pray thee."

"Squires there—what, ho, within!" cried

the Wolfe, "hath no one as yet heard aught of Sir Andrew Stewart?"

"No one, my noble Earl," replied an esquire who waited.

"By the holy mass, then," said the Wolfe, "but the caitiff hath taken refuge in some of my strongholds. But 'twill be hard an we ferret him not out.—Ha! knaves there, let fifty mounted lances be ready in the lawnde beyond the land-sconce ere I can wind my bugle."

The Wolfe of Badenoch was restored to all his pristine vigour by the very thought of going on an expedition, even although it was against his own son. The court-yard rang with the bustle the Castle was thrown into, and all the boats were put in requisition, to ferry the horses across. Everything was ready for them to mount at the land-sconce in an incredibly short space of time; but however short the delay, still it was too much for his impatience; nor was his companion less restless than the Wolfe, till he found himself in saddle. When all were mounted, the monk showed, by his forward riding, that there was little risk of his being a drag upon the speed of the furious-pricking knight, and the Wolfe of Badenoch exulted to behold his horsemanship.

"By the Mass," cried he, pulling up a little,

"but thou art a prince of friars;—'tis a pleasure, I vow, to have a stalwarth monk like thee as a confessor;—wouldst thou be mine, thou shouldst ever ride at mine elbow. Where hadst thou thy schooling, Sir Friar?"

"I have rode in the lists ere now," replied the Franciscan; "yea, and war have I seen in all its fashions. But it doth now befit me to forget these vain carnal contentions, and to fight against mine own evil passions, the which are harder to subdue than any living foe. And in this let me be an ensample to thee, my lord, for verily the time is but short sith that I was as violent and tempestuous as thyself; and hard is it even yet for me, frail man as I am, to keep down the raging devil that is within me. May the blessed Virgin increase our virtuous resolution!" said he, crossing himself.

To this pious ejaculation the Wolfe added a hearty "Amen;" and they again pushed on at the same rapid pace at which they had originally started.

CHAPTER XV.

The Wolfe of Badenoch and the Franciscan had hardly reached the end of the lake, when they descried a mounted knight approaching them.

"By all that is marvellous," cried the Wolfe, halting suddenly, "but yonder doth come my very son Andrew!"

"Is it indeed Sir Andrew Stewart?" said the Franciscan; "methinks he cometh as if he had little fear of blame about him."

"By'r Lady, but his coming home thus at all doth look something like honesty," said the Wolfe; "but do thou let me question him, holy father, nor fear that I will deal over gently with him.—So, Sir Andrew," cried he, as soon as his son was near enough to hear him, "I do rejoice to behold thee again. Whence comest thou, I pray thee?"

"From Elgin straightway, my noble father," replied Sir Andrew Stewart.

"Marry, and what hath kept thee there so long, then?" demanded the Wolfe; "methought that thou hadst seen enow to teach thee that no whelp of mine could be welcome guest there."

"In truth, I did so find it indeed," replied Sir Andrew Stewart.

"Then what a murrain hath kept thee there?" demanded the Wolfe sternly: "Come, thou knowest I am not over patient. Thy story—thy story quickly. What befell thee after thou didst enter the blazing Spital of the Maison Dieu? Didst thou rescue the damosel—the Lady Beatrice?"

"I did," replied the unblushing knight; "verily, I rushed to the upper chamber through the fire and the smoke, and I did snatch her from the very flames, and bear her forth in safety."

"There thou liest, caitiff," roared out the Wolfe; "thou dost lie in the very threshold of thy story. By the Mass, but we shall judge of the remainder of thy tale by the sample thou hast already given us. But go on, Sir Andrew. What didst thou with her after thou didst save her as thou saidest? ay, and tell us, too, how thou didst escape?"

"But first, where is she now?" demanded the Friar, breaking in.

"Nay, Sir Friar, be not impatient," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch; "thou wilt gain nothing by impatience. Interrupt him not, I entreat thee; but let him go on in order.—Proceed, sirrah."

"I retreated with the Lady Beatrice, through the chapel of the Maison Dieu," replied Sir Andrew Stewart, now assuming greater caution as to what he uttered.

"Well, Sir Knight," exclaimed the Franciscan keenly, "what hast thou done with her? Speak to that at once."

"Nay, Sir Friar, why wilt thou thus persist in taking speech?" demanded the Wolfe testily; "thou art most unreasonably hasty. By the beard of my grandfather, but impatience and unbridled passion doth ever defeat itself. Dost thou not see that I am cool and unflurried with this knave's-face? Answer me, villain," roared he to his son, "answer me, thou disgrace to him from whom thou art sprung—thou child of thine infamous mother—answer me, I tell thee, quickly, and to the point, or, by the blood of the Bruce, I shall forget that thou hast any claim to be called my son."

"Be not angry with me, father," said Sir Andrew, trembling; "verily, the lady is safe, for all that I do know of her; and——"

"Where hast thou bestowed her, villain?" shouted the Wolfe; "speak, or, by all the fiends, thou shalt never speak more."

"I will, father, if thou wilt but suffer me," replied the terrified Sir Andrew Stewart.

"Why dost thou not go on, then?" cried the Wolfe, yet more impatiently; "where hast thou bestowed the lady, villain? An we be not possessed by thee of the whole of thy story, and of the place where thou hast confined her, in less time than the flight of an arrow doth continue, by the blessed bones of my ancestors, I shall cause hang thee up, though thou be'st called my son."

"The lady is not in my hands," replied Sir Andrew Stewart, in terrible alarm; "she fled from me in the garden of the Maison Dieu, and I did never see her more."

"Hay—what?—but this may be all of a piece with the beginning of thy tale, which we know was false as hell," replied the Wolfe.

"Nay, we do indeed know so much as that thou didst never save her," cried the Franciscan; "we do know right well how she was saved; yea, and we do know, moreover, that thou didst seize her as she did pass through the chapel, and thou wert heard with her in the

garden. Tell me speedily whither thou didst carry her, and where is she now?"

"Ay, where is she now," cried the Wolfe; "out with the truth, if thou would'st escape hanging. Be assured that every false word thou mayest utter shall be proved against thee; so see that thou dost speak truth."

"Have mercy on me, father," cried the wretched Sir Andrew Stewart, throwing himself from his horse, and dropping on his knees between the Wolfe and the Franciscan; "have mercy on me, and I will tell thee all the truth. To my shame I do confess, that vanity, and the fear of my father's wrath against my cowardice, did prompt me to utter that which was false; and——"

"Ha! where is she then, villain?" cried the Wolfe, interrupting him.

"Distraction! where hast thou concealed her?" cried the Franciscan.

"Verily, I know nothing of her," said the knight.

"Wretch, dost thou return to thy falsehood?" cried the Franciscan.

"Nay, what I say in this respect is most true," said Sir Andrew Stewart; "it was in saying that I did rescue the Lady Beatrice that I spake falsely. I was too much daunted by

the fierceness of the flames to venture aloft; but having been once upon a time a guest in the Maison Dieu, I well knew its various passages, one of which did lead from the bottom of the main staircase of the building directly into the chapel, whence I was aware that a retreat into the garden was easy. As I entered the chapel, I beheld one of the sisterhood of the Maison Dieu hobbling away with the Lady Beatrice. Mine ancient passion returned upon me, and——"

"Villain! thou didst carry her off," cried the Franciscan, interrupting him.

"Thou lying caitiff, where hast thou concealed her?" cried the Wolfe.

"I did straightway attempt to lay hands upon her, when she fled before me into the garden, and escaped among the trees and bushes, where I instantly lost all trace of her."

"But where hast thou been all this time sithence?" demanded the Wolfe fiercely; "answer me straightway to that."

"My Lord Earl," replied Sir Andrew Stewart, "as I wandered in the garden, I did encounter the old gardener, who, under the light of the burning, did remember me for one of thy sons. He instantly seized me, and having snatched my sword from my side, he did swear

potent oaths that he would put me to death if I dared offer to resist; and with these threats he forced me through the garden, and plunged me into a deep vault at its farther extremity, where I was immured without food for two days."

"Ha! and by the holy Rood thou didst well merit it all, I ween, thou most pitiful of cowards," cried the Wolfe, angrily gnashing his teeth; "what, thou the son of the Wolfe of Badenoch, to be frayed and captured by an old doting unarmed gardener! By all the fiends, but thou dost deserve to wear a kirtle and petticoat, and to have a distaff to handle. But what more hast thou to tell, thou shame to knighthood?"

"When I was nearly spent by hunger and thirst," continued Sir Andrew, "the gardener came, with some of the brethren of the Maison Dieu, to take me from my prison, and I was led before the Bishop of Moray."

"Ha! and how did the Bishop treat thee?" interrupted the Wolfe.

"He received me with much mildness and gentleness," replied Sir Andrew Stewart; "and he did severely chide those who so cruelly left me without food; and ere he would allow a question to be put to me, he did straightway order my hunger and thirst to be forthwith

satisfied; and when I had well eaten and drank, he ordered an apartment to be instantly prepared for me, that I might enjoy the repose of the which I had so much need; and verily I was right glad to accept of the proffered blessing. The Bishop did keep me with him until a messenger came to him from Lochyndorbe, after which he entertained me rather as his favoured guest than as his prisoner."

"Nay, so far he speaketh truth," said the Franciscan; "that messenger was mine; he was the messenger of peace."

"I do indeed speak the truth in everything now," replied Sir Andrew Stewart; "the which thou mayest soon learn from the Bishop himself; for I am sent before him to announce a peaceful visitation from him, and he will be here anon."

"Ha! if thou hadst but listened, Sir Friar," cried the Wolfe, "if thine impatience had but suffered thee to listen, we had saved much time."

"Yea, much time mought have indeed been saved," said the Franciscan; "but, sinner that I am, what hath become of the Lady Beatrice? Her disappearance is most mysterious, if what Sir Andrew Stewart hath told be indeed true."

"But didst thou not say that the Bishop was coming hither, son Andrew?" cried the Wolfe

of Badenoch; "what force doth he bring with him?"

"He bringeth not a single armed man with him," replied Sir Andrew Stewart; "nay, he hath not above some fifteen or twenty persons in all his company."

"Had we not better hasten us homewards?" said the Wolfe to the Franciscan; "had we not better hasten to prepare for receiving my Lord Bishop, sith that he doth honour me so far?"

"Thou art right, my lord," replied the Franciscan, starting from a reverie into which he had fallen; "it may be that my Lord Bishop may peraunter have some tidings to give me of her about whom I am so much interested."

The Franciscan had little leisure to think more of the Lady Beatrice at that time. They were no sooner within the Castle-walls, than he found that he had a sufficient task to fulfil in preparing the fierce mind of the Wolfe of Badenoch for receiving the Bishop with that peaceful humility which became a sincere penitent. It was so far a fortunate circumstance that the Wolfe himself was already very greatly touched by the prelate's generous conduct towards his sons Duncan and Andrew, whom fortune had placed at his mercy.

"By the Rood," exclaimed he, "but the

Bishop hath shown kindness where, in truth, I had but little reason to expect it at his hands. He might have hanged both my boys, taken, as I may say they were, red-handed in a manner. Then his coming thus doth show but little of that haughtiness of the which I did believe him to be possessed. By this hand, we shall muster out our garrison, and meet him on the landsconce with all our warlike parade, that we may do him all the honour that may be."

"Nay," replied the monk mildly, "not so, I do entreat thee, my lord. Let us appear there with all the symbols of peace and humility, and——"

"What," interrupted the Wolfe hastily, "would'st thou have me put myself in the power of the prelate?"

"Nay, thou needest hardly fear that, if thou rememberest what thy son Sir Andrew did say of the unarmed state of his small escort," replied the Franciscan; "and, in truth, meseems that if the peaceful Bishop doth adventure so far as to intrust himself and his people unarmed in thy stronghold, it would speak but little for the bold heart of the Earl of Buchan, to go armed, and attended by armed men. Nay, nay, my lord; of a truth, this is a bold act of the Bishop of Moray, when all that hath passed

is well considered. He hath indeed been generous, and now he doth prove himself to be dauntless. Let him not have to boast, then, that he hath outdone thee either in generosity or in fearlessness. I need not call upon thee to remember thee of thy vow, the which I did witness, and which is now registered in Heaven. Show that thou art truly penitent and humble, and remember that thine abasement before God's minister is but thine abasement before God, who hath already shown thee such tender mercy, and who will yet show thee more."

After listening to this exhortation, the Wolfe of Badenoch became thoughtful, and the Franciscan gradually ventured to propose to him the manner in which it would best become him to receive the Bishop. The countenance of the ferocious warrior showed sufficiently how painful the humiliation was to his feelings; but he submitted patiently if not cheerfully, and the necessary preparations were accordingly made.

The warder who was stationed in the barbican blew his horn to announce the first appearance of the Bishop's party, who were seen winding like black specks through the scattered greenwood at the farther end of the lake. The colony of herons were scarcely disturbed by their

slow and silent march. The little fleet of boats clustered under the Castle-walls was manned, and the Wolfe of Badenoch and his whole garrison were rowed across to the land-sconce, where they immediately formed themselves into a procession, and walked onwards to meet those who were coming.

First went fifty warriors, unarmed and with their heads bare. Then followed the Wolfe of Badenoch himself, also unarmed, and wearing a black hood and surcoat. At his side was the Franciscan, and behind him were his sons Andrew and Duncan, after whom came fifty more of his people. The Bishop approached, mounted on his palfrey, surrounded by some of the dignitaries of his diocese, and followed by a few monks, and a small train of attendants. The Wolfe of Badenoch's men halted, and dividing themselves into two lines, formed a lane for the Bishop and his party to advance. The Wolfe moved forward to meet the prelate; but though his garb was that of a humble penitent, his eye and his bearing were those of a proud prince.

"Ah, there is the good Bishop, who was so kind to me at Spynie," cried little Duncan, clapping his hands with joy; "he did teach me to play bowls, father, and he gave me so many

nice sweetmeats. Let me run to him, I beseech thee."

The boy's innocent speech was enough; it brought a grappling about the heart of the stern Wolfe of Badenoch; he hastened forward to the end of the lane of men, and made an effort to reach the Bishop's stirrup, that he might hold it for him to dismount.

"Nay, nay," said the good man, preventing his intention, by quitting his saddle ere he could reach him; "I may not allow the son of my King so to debase himself."

"My Lord Bishop," said the Wolfe, prompted by the Franciscan, "behold one who doth humbly throw himself on the mercy and forgiveness of God and of thee."

"The mercy of God was never refused to a repentant sinner," replied the Bishop; "and as for the forgiveness of a fallible being like me, I wot, I do myself lack too much of God's pardon to dare refuse it to a fellow-sinner. May God, then, in his mercy, pardon thee on thy present submission, and on the score of that penance to which thou art prepared to submit."

"My Lord Bishop," replied the Wolfe, "I am ready to submit to whatsoever penance it may please thee to enjoin me. Thy mercy to my sons, and in especial that to my boy Dun-

can, hath subdued me to thy will. But let me entreat of thee, that, sinner though I be, thou wilt honour my Castle of Lochyndorbe with thy sacred presence. There shall I learn thy volunde, the which I do here solemnly vow, before the blessed Virgin and the Holy Trinity, whom I have offended, to perform to the veriest tittle, were it to be a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre itself. Trust me, thy tender mercy towards me and mine hath wrought more with me than all that thy power or thy threats could have done."

"Let us not talk more of this matter at this time, my Lord," replied the Bishop; "I do hereby take upon me, in the meanwhile, conditionally to remove from thee the dread sentence of excommunication, seeing thou hast made all the concession as yet in thy power, and that thou art ready to make what reparation thou canst for what hath passed, and to do such penance as may be required of thee; and so shall I cheerfully accept thy hospitality for this night."

The Wolfe of Badenoch's men stared at each other, to behold their fierce master thus become the peaceable companion of the very prelate and monk against whom the full stream of his fury had been so lately directed. They shrug-

ged and looked wise at each other, but no one ventured to utter a word; and the two processions having mingled their truly heterogeneous materials together, they turned towards the land-sconce, and peacefully entering the boats, crossed the lake to the Castle, where the chief personages were soon afterwards to be seen harmoniously seated at the same festive board. But before they were so assembled, the Franciscan had a conference with the Bishop in his private apartment.

"Thou hast indeed well served the cause of the church, Friar John," said the prelate to him; "yea, thou hast done God and our holy religion good service, by having thus so miraculously tamed this wild and ferocious Wolfe. Thou hast tilled a hardened soil, that hath heretofore borne but thistles, thorns, and brambles, that did enter into our flesh and tear our very hearts. But thy hand must not be taken from the plough until thy task be complete. Thou must forward with the Earl of Buchan towards Perth to-morrow. 'Twere well to take him while his mind is yet soft with the meliorating dews of penitence. I have spoken to him apart sith that I did come in hither. Already hath he agreed to make over to me certain large sums in gold, to be placed at the disposal of our chapter, as

alswa divers annual rents springing from a wide extent of territory, to be expended in the restoration of our Cathedral. Moreover, he hath declared himself ready to perform the penance I have enjoined him, the ceremonial of which thou wilt find detailed in this parchment, after which he will be absolved by the godly Walter Traill, Bishop of St Andrews, in the Blackfriars Church of Perth. To thy prudence and care do I commit the proper ordering and execution of all that this parchment and these directions I have written do contain, seeing there be none other who could do it so well."

"I must obey all thy commands, my sacred Lord," replied the friar; "yet is my mind ill attuned to the task, seeing it is distracted because of the uncertain fate of the Lady Beatrice. I beseech thee, hath any tidings of her reached thee?"

"Nay, I heard not of her," replied the Bishop, "save what I gathered from Sir Andrew Stewart, who parted with her in the garden of the Maison Dieu. Yet did I not cease to make inquiry—and, in truth, I do greatly fear that she hath availed herself of her liberty to flee towards the south, to join herself to him with whom she did once so scandalously associate, and for whom, thou sayest, she hath unblush-

ingly confessed her unextinguishable love. I hear, our Scottish champions have returned from the English expedition, and doubtless Sir Patrick Hepborne the younger is by this time at the Court of King Robert at Scone, if he hath not been detained in the Tower, to answer for his outrage. From what thou hast told me, there must have been secret concert between the knight and Beatrice. She must, therefore, have been well possessed of all his intentions—and if so, she was well prepared to avail herself of any chance of escape, that she might fly to join herself to him again. Hadst thou any talk with her on the subject of Sir Patrick Hepborne?"

"Never, my sacred lord, sith the night when Friar Rushak enabled me to take her from the Tower," replied the Franciscan. "Nay, save some short dialogue between us soon after the ship weighed anchor, when, to quiet her fears and compose her mind, I did tell her the secret in which she was so much interested, and explained to her by what right I so assumed control over her—the stormy voyage, and the fatigues that followed it, left me no leisure to hold farther converse with her. But thou art right, my gracious Lord Bishop. She hath doubtless fled to her paramour, who seems to

carry some love-enchantment about him, that he hath so bewitched her."

"The King hath lately removed to Scone," said the Bishop; "so, I do verily think, that in going to Perth on this errand of the church, thou shalt have the best chance to recover her who hath fled from thee; at least thou wilt hear of Sir Patrick Hepborne; and where he is, there will she be also."

"I do verily believe so the more I turn the subject in my thoughts," replied the Franciscan; "nay, it can be no other wise. Trust me, I do gladly give thee thanks for this hint, as well as for all thy friendly actings towards me. I shall go hence with Lord Badenoch tomorrow. My heart shall first of all be given to the service of the blessed church, the which I do yet hope to see raise her head but so much the higher from these her late calamities. That accomplished, I shall seek for and find Beatrice, though her foul seducer should conceal her in the bowels of the earth."

The hot feud had so long subsisted between the Wolfe of Badenoch and the Bishop of Moray, that each had for many years viewed the other through a false medium. The eyes of the ferocious Earl had been especially diseased, and now that the scales had been removed from

them, he was astonished to discover the mild and unpretending demeanour, and the forgiving disposition of the man whom he had believed to be his proud and implacable enemy. This induced him to overwhelm the Bishop with all that the kindness of his native hospitality could devise, and so a mutual re-action took place between them, which the politic Franciscan took every opportunity to improve. The Wolfe even listened with tolerable patience of countenance, and altogether without offensive reply, to the Bishop's remonstrance on the subject of his misconduct to his wife, Euphane Countess of Ross; and, strange as it may seem, he solemnly vowed that the first step he should take after doing penance, would be to receive that injured woman again to his bosom.

Preparations for an early march next morning were made with that expedition with which all his orders were generally executed by his well-disciplined people; and when the time of departure came, the Bishop and he set out cordially together, and afterwards separated, each to pursue his respective way, with a friendly regret that can only be comprehended by those who are well conversant in the whimsical issues of the human heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

Allowing the Wolfe of Badenoch and his friend the Franciscan to proceed on their journey, we must now return to inquire into the fate of Sir Patrick Hepborne. We left him lying on the straw in his dungeon, giving way to a paroxysm of grief for having been so cruelly rent from the Lady Beatrice, tormenting himself with fears for her safety, and refusing the comfort which his esquire Mortimer Sang, and Master Lawrence Ratcliffe, were in vain attempting to administer to him. Whilst he was in this state of bitter affliction, the door of the dungeon was again opened, and a number of guards entering, silently approached him. Believing that they were about to lead him to immediate execution, he rose to meet them.

"I am ready," said he recklessly; "my life is now but of little value to me. The sooner it is over the better. Lead on then, my friends."

Mortimer Sang sprang forward to prevent

their seizure of his master, but he was speedily overpowered, and Sir Patrick was led passively away.

He was conducted through a long dark passage, and finally lodged in a cell, to which he ascended by a short circular flight of steps. He questioned his conductors as to what was to be his fate, but they retired without giving him any reply. His new prison, though small, was less dark and gloomy than the larger dungeon from which he had been taken; and though sufficiently strong, it had an air of greater comfort about it; yet would he willingly have exchanged it for that he had left, to have been again blessed with the society of his esquire and the wine-merchant. He seemed to be now condemned to solitary imprisonment, and he anticipated the worst possible intentions from this seclusion. The survey he took of the four walls that enclosed him, left him no hope of escape. There was indeed another small door besides that by which he had entered, but both were so powerfully fenced with iron as to be perfectly impregnable. He viewed this second door with an eye of suspicion, and the idea, that through it might enter the assassins who were privily to dispatch him, presented death to him in a shape so uninviting, that, ready as he had

been to lay down his life but the moment before, he now resolved to sell it as dearly as he could, although he had no other weapons but his hands to defend himself with.

He sat down on a stone bench in a niche in the wall opposite to this suspicious door, and fixing his eye on it, he fell into a reverie, from which he was roused by the sound of footsteps, as if descending towards it. He sprang up, that he might be prepared for action. The door opened, and a young man in the garb of a lacquey, and altogether unarmed, appeared at the bottom of a very narrow spiral staircase. He made an obeisance to Sir Patrick, and silently, but respectfully beckoned him to follow; and the knight, resolving to pursue his fate, immediately obeyed. He was conducted up several flights of steps, until at length, to his great surprise, he was brought into a little oratory, where he was again left alone.

He had not waited long, when a pannel in the wall, behind the altar, opened, and a Franciscan friar appeared. The knight regarded him with a calm and steady look. It was Friar Rushak, the King's confessor.

"Sir Patrick Hepborne," said the monk mildly to him, "I come to thee on private embassage from the Royal Richard. Thine intem-

perance in breaking in upon his privacy as thou didst, hath led thee to be accused, by some who are more zealous than prudent, of having made a premeditated attempt to assassinate his Majesty. But this hath been done without the Royal sanction; for albeit that appearances do of a surety most powerfully array themselves against thee, yet he doth acquit thee of all such traitrous intent. But thou hast been led by blind fury to lift thine hand against the Sovereign whose hospitality thou dost now enjoy, and that too in defence of one against whom he did mean nothing dishonourable, though circumstances may have wrought up her fears to believe that he did."

"What!" cried Hepborne, with a strong expression of doubt in his face; "so King Richard doth deny all dishonourable intention against the Lady Beatrice? But what availeth it if he doth so? Hath he not sithence devoted her to certain destruction, by giving her up to one who hath already proved himself to be her enemy, yea, an assassin, who would have murdered her?"

"Sir Knight," said Friar Rushak, after some moments' thought, "trust me, the King had no hand in the disposal of her. He did never see the lady after that moment when thou didst

force him to retreat before thine inconsiderate rage. But, an assassin—a murderer, said'st thou? How canst thou so accuse a brother of St Francis?"

"Because I have good reason to know that he did once steal into the chamber of the Lady Beatrice at the hour of midnight, armed with a dagger," cried Hepborne impatiently; "and had she not saved herself by flight——"

"Thou must suffer me to tell thee that this strange tale is difficult of credence with me," said Friar Rushak, interrupting him; "the more, too, that it cometh from the very knight whom report doth accuse of having taught the damsel to stray from the path of virtue, and to whom she oweth her present infamy."

"What mean ye, Friar?" cried Sir Patrick Hepborne, with mingled indignation and astonishment. "Who hath so foully and falsely dared to charge me and the Lady Beatrice—she who is pure as an angel of light—Who, I say, hath dared to prefer so foul and false an accusation?"

"The Franciscan whom thou——"

"Villain!" cried Sir Patrick, interrupting Friar Rushak, and giving way to a rage which he was quite unable to control; "villain, black and damnable villain! I swear by the honour

of a knight, that his charge is false as hell. Pardon me, holy father, for my just ire. I do beseech thee, tell me what thou dost know of this wretch, of this assassin, who doth so foully stab reputation too, and who hath so imposed on thy too easy belief—What, I pray thee, dost thou know of him?"

"Nay, I am ashamed to say, I know not much," replied Friar Rushak, already shaken in his opinion of the Franciscan by the solemnity of Sir Patrick's asseverations; "yet what I do know I was about to tell thee, when thou didst break in on my speech. Being yesterday at the Franciscan convent in the Newgate Street, a stranger brother of the order did claim a private audience of me, when he entreated mine aid to recover a damsel of good family from the house of the Lady de Vere. He stated his belief that she had come thither for the purpose of meeting with thee, with whom she had once lived in lawless love, hid in the disguise of a page, a connexion which both were impatient to renew. He said, that it was intended to bury her disgrace in a convent. Fearing, for certain reasons, that the King might see her at the Lady de Vere's, and so be misled to take up with one so light, I resolved to do my best to assist in her removal, and to this I was after-

wards the more spurred on, by hearing that Richard had gone expressly to meet with her, as I did believe, by her own especial consent. Availing myself of my private knowledge of the palace, I did enable the stranger Franciscan to take her from the apartment, where she succeeded in convincing me that she was no willing captive; and the King's confession of this morning, the which I am so far permitted to impart to thee, hath satisfied me that I had weened too gravely of the matter as it did regard him, and that the whole of his share in it did but arise from a harmless piece of humour."

"And whither hath the Lady Beatrice been carried by this villain?" cried Hepborne, in all the agony of apprehension for her safety.

"He took her hence by water," said Friar Rushak, "and Scotland did seem to be the object of his voyage. But, of a truth, mine intercourse with the foul deceiver was so short, that I had little leisure to question him."

"Fiend!" cried Sir Patrick Hepborne, his rage overpowering his grief, "if St Baldrid do but speed me, I shall find him though he were to flee unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Meanwhile, may God in his mercy, and the blessed Virgin in her purity, protect the Lady Beatrice!"

"Amen! my son," said the father confessor. "Verily I do grieve for thee and for her; and of a truth, I do bitterly reproach mine own facile credence, the which hath led me to be the innocent author of this misfortune. Thou shalt have my prayers.—Meanwhile, let us return to the object of my mission. Richard did send me to tell thee, that he doth freely forgive thee thine indiscreet attack on his sacred person, seeing it was committed under a delusion. Thou and thine esquire are forthwith liberated, under his word as a king, and yours as a knight, that all that hath passed shall be buried in oblivion by both sides; and farther, that thou, on thy part, shalt fasten no quarrel on Sir Hans de Vere for what hath passed."

"Nay," replied Hepborne; "meseems that his Majesty doth ask too much, in demanding of me to withhold punishment in a quarter where it is so justly due."

"Yea, and where it would be so well merited, Sir Knight," observed the Friar Rushak. "But yet must thou yield for peace's sake."

"Thou mayest tell the King, then," said Hepborne, "that as a mark of the high sense I entertain of his hospitality, he shall be obeyed herein, and that Sir Hans de Vere shall find shelter under it from my just indignation."

"And now let me show thee forth, Sir Knight," said Friar Rushak.

"Ere I go," said Hepborne, forgetting not the misery of others amid his own affliction; "ere I go hence, let me entreat thee to use thine influence with his Majesty for the liberation of mine host, Master Lawrence Ratcliffe."

"Knowest thou aught of this same Ratcliffe, Sir Knight?" demanded the friar after a pause, during which he had endeavoured to read Hepborne's countenance.

"Nay, nothing further than that I have experienced his hospitality, by his Majesty's good will," replied Hepborne.

"And how may he have treated thee and thine?" inquired Rushak, resuming a careless air.

"With a kindness for which I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude," replied Hepborne.

"'Tis well," replied Rushak. "Then may I tell thee in confidence that he hath been for some time suspected as a malcontent, and after thine attempt of yesternight against the King, he was taken up by the officious minions of power, as the most likely person to have set thee on. But I may now promise for his liberation. Thou shalt forthwith see him at his own

house, and he shall know, ere he goeth, that it is to thee he oweth his liberty."

Sir Patrick Hepborne now hastened home to his lodgings, whither he was soon afterwards followed by his esquire and Master Lawrence Ratcliffe. The former was all joy, and the latter all gratitude. By and by he was joined by Adam of Gordon, who wept bitterly for the fate of the Lady Beatrice. Hepborne, much as he wanted comfort himself, found it necessary to administer it to the good old man, whom he immediately took into his service. He was now impatient to begin his quest after the Franciscan, and he would have quitted London immediately, could he have easily procured a safe-conduct for himself individually; but this could not be granted. Sir David Lindsay, however, having witnessed the perfect recovery of the Lord Welles, on whom he had been unceasing in his attendance, he readily yielded to Hepborne's impatience, and the brave band of Scottish knights departed, leaving a sweet odour of good fame, both for courtesy and deeds of arms, behind them.

Their journey was speedily and safely performed; and they were no sooner in Scotland, than Hepborne hastened to Hailes Castle, whither he was accompanied by his friends. Thence

he was eager to pursue his way northwards to Elgin, where he believed that the Franciscan had his abode, and whither he thought it likely that he had conveyed his prisoner. But Sir John Haliburton, to whom he had been much attached ever since their first acquaintance at Tarnawa, and with whom his friendship had been drawn yet tighter by the intercourse he held during their late expedition, had already extracted a promise from him that he would be present at his marriage with the Lady Jane de Vaux, a promise from which he felt it impossible to rid himself by any excuse he could invent. But this, he hoped, would occasion him but small delay, for the Lord of Dirleton, with his lady and daughter, were understood to be with the Court at Scone; and thither Sir John Haliburton resolved to proceed immediately, in the hope that the consummation of his happiness would not be long deferred. Delay to Hepborne was distraction; but it was at least some small comfort to him, that at Scone he would be so much nearer that part of Scotland, whither his anxiety now so powerfully drew him.

The whole party then hastened to Scone, which the residence of the Court had already made the general rendezvous of the great. There Sir Patrick Hepborne had the happiness to find his

father, and there he also embraced his happy sister Isabelle, and her Assueton. The Lord of Dirleton and his lady expressed much pleasure in again enjoying his society; but, to the great grief of Sir John Haliburton, and to the secret mortification of his friend Sir Patrick, the Lady Jane de Vaux was not with her father and mother, for, not being aware of the so early return of the knights from England, they had permitted their daughter to accompany the Countess of Moray from Aberdeen to Tarnawa, whence that noble lady was daily expected to bring her to Scone.

The venerable King Robert received the knights who had so nobly supported the honour of Scotland on the bloody field of Otterbourne, with distinguished cordiality and condescension. Sir Patrick Hepborne was among those who were most highly honoured. To him was granted the privilege, only extended to a limited number of courtiers, of entering the royal presence at all times; and Robert, pressing his hand with a warmth which kings seldom permit themselves to show, told him, that the more frequently he availed himself of the power of approaching him, the more he would add to his satisfaction. This flattering reception from his aged King, together with the gratifying notice

bestowed on him by the Earl of Fife and Menteith, now the Regent of the kingdom, might have made him well contented to prolong his residence at Court, and little regret the delay of Haliburton's marriage, had it not been for the thought, that never forsook him, of the mysterious fate, and probable misery, of the Lady Beatrice. His mind was ceaselessly employed in fancying a thousand improbable things regarding her, and he was generally abstracted, in the midst of those gay scenes, which the politic Regent took care should follow one another with the greatest rapidity, that he might the better keep his hold of the fickle hearts of the nobles. In vain were the fairest eyes of the Court thrown upon Sir Patrick Hepborne; their warm glances were invariably chilled by the freezing indifference by which they were met.

Day after day passed away, and still no appearance of the Countess of Moray and her lovely companion; and Haliburton's loudly-expressed impatience was only to be equalled by that which affected Hepborne in secret. The two knights had nearly agreed to proceed northwards together, a plan proposed by Hepborne, and listened to by Haliburton with great gratitude, as he considered it a very strong proof of his friend's anxiety for his happiness. But, hap-

pening to recollect that the party from Tarnawa might reach Scone perhaps a few hours only after they should leave it on this doubtful expedition, and that the long-wished-for meeting with his beloved Jane de Vaux might thus be much delayed, instead of hastened, Haliburton, to Hepborne's very great grief, abandoned the scheme as unwise. Soon afterwards came the intelligence of the burning of Elgin, which, whilst it threw a gloom over the whole Court, filled Hepborne's mind with fresh apprehensions and anxieties.

CHAPTER XVII.

It happened one day, that Sir Patrick went to pay his duty to the King, and understanding, as he passed through the ante-room, from those who were in waiting, that his Majesty was in the apartment he usually occupied as a private audience-chamber, he approached, and opened the door. To his unspeakable astonishment, he beheld the very Franciscan whom he was so anxious to go in search of, standing beside his Majesty's chair, and in close conference with him. They were alone. Holding a letter and a parchment carelessly folded in his hand, his Majesty seemed to have been much moved with what had been passing between him and the Monk, and he was so much occupied in listening, that Sir Patrick's entrance could have hardly been observed, had not the opening of the door startled both of them. Sir Patrick was so petrified with what he beheld, that he had neither self-command enough to retreat, as he ought to have

done, nor to apologise, as the interruption demanded.

"Another time, Sir Patrick Hepborne," said the King, nodding him away. But his Majesty was compelled to repeat the hint ere the knight had so far regained his self-possession as to take it, and when he did retire, it was with a face overwhelmed with confusion, and with a heart boiling with rage against the monk.

"Ha!" said he, at length, in soliloquy; "at least I am now nearer the object of my anxious quest than I did think I was. This friar must be a fiend, who can thus so soon catch the King's ear. But, fiend or mortal, he shall not escape me. How malignant was his eye-glance, shot at me the moment that he heard my name uttered. But, by St Baldrid, were he a basilisk I will seize him by the throat. He shall tell me where he hath hid her who is the idol of my soul; yea, he shall disgorge all that his black heart doth contain, even though the monarch himself should endeavour to protect him. What if the Lady Beatrice may be here?—Oh misery! so near me, and yet am I denied the delight of hearing that voice, the which did so soothe mine ear when it came from the lips of my faithful page—or of beholding that eye, which did so beam upon me with looks that nothing but love

could have explained.—But the monk at least shall not escape me this time.—I shall station myself here, and watch his approach, albeit he should tarry within till doomsday."

After thinking, rather than uttering, all this, Sir Patrick mingled with the crowd in the anteroom, where he waited patiently for the greater part of the day, until the King came forth to get into his litter to take the air. His Majesty appeared unattended by the friar, and then it was that Sir Patrick Hepborne began to recollect what his agitation had made him overlook before, that the Franciscan must have been admitted, and allowed to retire, by a private passage, only accessible to those who received a very particular confidential audience of his Majesty. Hepborne threw himself as much in the King's way as he could, and made a very marked obeisance to him as he passed; but Robert, who usually received all his advances with peculiar kindness and condescension, now turned from him with a certain distance of manner that could not be mistaken, and which chilled Sir Patrick to the heart. At once it flashed upon him that the Franciscan, who had so strangely possessed himself of the King's ear, must have poisoned it against him, as he had formerly done that of friar Rushak. His rage against the monk grew

to tenfold strength, and, in the agony of his distraction, he resolved to risk his Majesty's displeasure by seeking his presence again, rather than not gain his object. He determined to accuse the Franciscan to the King, as he who had stolen away, and perhaps murdered, the Lady Beatrice, and this in defiance of all consequences.

Sir Patrick again tried to catch the royal eye, as the King returned from his airing, but again he had the mortification to observe that he was shunned and neglected. His Majesty appeared not at the banquet, where, indeed, he had not been since the news of the burning of Elgin had reached him; and when Hepborne thought on this, a faint hope came over him that the King's neglect might, perhaps, proceed from no particular feeling against him, but might arise from the vexation that must naturally fill the royal breast on this unhappy occasion. But then again he remembered, with incalculable chagrin, that although the sunshine of the Monarch's smiles had been eclipsed towards him, it had fallen with all its wonted cheering influence upon some who were near him, and who had hitherto been considered as planets of a much lower order, and of infinitely less happy influence than himself.

But Sir Patrick now became so impatient to get at the truth, that he threw aside all that delicacy which might have otherwise swayed him. He resolved to make an attempt to obtain an audience of his Majesty at his hour of couchée; and, accordingly, entering the ante-room a little before the time, he made his inquiries for that purpose.

"The King hath given strict orders that no one be admitted to him," replied the Lord in waiting, to whom he addressed himself. "He doth hold private conference. And between you and me, Sir Patrick Hepborne, I do verily believe that it is with his son the furious Wolfe of Badenoch, who hath so besieged the Bishop of Moray, that he is to hold parlance."

"What, hath the Earl of Buchan arrived then?" demanded Sir Patrick.

"Yea, he is here," replied the nobleman with whom he talked. "Hast thou not heard that to-morrow the streets of St Johnstoun will see a sight the like of which hath not been seen in Scotland before? for there the fierce and proud Wolfe of Badenoch is to walk in penance from the Castle, where he now hath his lodging, to the Church of the Blackfriars."

"And how dost thou know all this?" demanded Sir Patrick Hepborne, who had pro-

bably heard the report, but who had been too much occupied with his own thoughts to attend to anything extraneous, however interesting it might be to others.

"The news hath already gone fully abroad," replied the nobleman; "but, moreover, all manner of preparation hath been already made for the ceremony; yea, and all the world do make arrangement for witnessing so great a miracle. I, for one, shall assuredly be there."

Sir Patrick Hepborne retired. As he passed by the entrance to the King's private staircase, a portly figure brushed by him, and entered it hastily. He called to mind that he had encountered the same as he left the King's presence at Aberdeen. It was indeed the Wolfe of Badenoch, but he had passed Sir Patrick Hepborne without observing him.

King Robert was at this moment seated in a large antique chair, placed close to the chimney corner, somewhat in the same dishabille as we have described him to have worn on a former occasion. His foot-bath stood ready prepared, and his attendant Vallance, who waited at a respectful distance, ventured more than once to remind his Majesty that the water was cooling. But the old man was deeply absorbed in serious thought. His eyes were directed to a huge va-

cuum in the hinder part of the chimney, amidst the black void of which, the play of his ideas went on without interruption. A gentle tap was heard at his private door.

"We would be private, Vallance," said the King, starting from his reverie, and pointing to his attendants to quit the apartment.

When they had withdrawn, Robert arose feebly, and propped himself on a cane. The knock at the private door was repeated. The old Monarch tottered towards the middle of the room. The knock was heard a third time, and with more impatience.

"If it be thou, son Alexander, come in," said the King.

The door opened, and the Wolfe of Badenoch entered, with a chastened step, and a mien very different from that which usually characterized him. He made an humble obeisance to his father. He spoke not, but his eyes glanced unsteadily towards the King, as if yet half in doubt what his reception might be. He beheld the old man standing before him struggling with emotions that convulsed his face and threw his whole frame into a fit of trembling. He saw that a great and mortifying change had taken place on his father since their last interview, and his conscience at once struck him that his own

disobedience and outrageous conduct must have largely contributed to produce the decay which was so evident. He was smitten to the heart.

"Oh, my father, my father!" cried he in a half-choked voice, "canst thou forgive me? When all have forgiven me, canst thou refuse me pardon?"

"Son Alexander," said Robert, in a voice that shook from agitation as well as debility, "all others may pardon thee, and yet it may be the duty of thy King, albeit that he is thy father, to put on sternness with thee. Nor have we been wanting in performance of the severe duty of a King towards thee; for ere we did receive the godly Bishop of Moray's letters regarding thee from the hands of the good Friar John, we had issued orders for the arrestment and warding of thy person in the nearest and most convenient of our prisons. Nor did we ever spare to meet thee with harsh reproof whilst thou wert headstrong and rebellious; but now that thou dost come before us as a penitent and afflicted son, saying, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight;' when thou comest as one willing to submit thee to all that the church may demand of thee in reparation or in penance for thine outrages, we can no longer remember that we are

a King, but we must yield us to those feelings which do now so stirringly tell us that we are a father. Oh, Alexander, my son, my son!" cried the old man, yielding to those emotions which he could no longer restrain, and bursting into a flood of tears, whilst he threw his aged arms around the manly form of the Wolfe of Badenoch; "the joy of this thy repentance doth more than recompense for all the affliction thou hast occasioned me during a long life. For thee, my son Alexander, have all my nights been sleepless; yea, and for thee have all my prayers been put up: blessed be the Holy Virgin, that they have not been put up in vain. Verily, I do sink fast into the grave; but thanks be to the Almighty King of kings, I shall now die in peace and with joy, sith that it hath pleased him to bring thee to a due sense of the enormity of thy guilt."

"Alas, alas!" cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, deeply affected by his father's wasted appearance, and sobbing aloud from remorse; "alas! I do fear that thy life hath been amenused by mine iniquities. Oh, father, I could bear all but this, the bitterest punishment of all. Thou hast sadly drooped sith that I did last behold thee. Would that I had then listened to the voice of thy wisdom, when it did so eloquently

speak. But a devil hath possessed me; and fiend that I was——"

"Speak not so, my son," cried the old King, who had now sufficiently recovered himself to be able to talk calmly. "Self-accusation, except in so far as it is used as an offering before Heaven, is but a vain thing. Let thy whole heart be given up to that contrition the which is between thee and thy God alone, through the medium and mediation of the blessed Virgin and her son; and let the seemliness and sincerity of thy public penance be an earnest of the amendment of thy future life."

"I will, I will, my father," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, much moved. "Would that ages of my penance could but add to the number of thy peaceful and righteous years; cheerfully would I wander as a barefooted palmer for the rest of my miserable days. Yet fancy not, my father, that I have lacked mine own share of punishment. The viper for whom I did risk thy wrath and that of Heaven, hath stung me to the heart. Ha!—but 'tis over now. The good friar John hath taught me to keep down the raging ire which her black and hellish ingratitude did excite within me. May the holy Virgin grant me aid to subdue it, that my whole heart may be in to-morrow's work; for, sooth

to say, 'tis cruel and cutting, after all, for a hardy, haughty soul like mine to bend me thus beneath the rod of the priesthood. Ha! by the bones of my ancestors, a king's son too—thy son! Nay, 'tis that the which doth most gall and chafe me; to think that thou should'st thus be brought into derision by the disgrace which befalleth me. Thou, a king who——"

"Son Alexander," said the venerable monarch, calmly interrupting the Wolfe of Badenoch, as he was gradually blowing up a self-kindled flame of passion, "think not of us—think not of us now. Thou should'st have thought of us and of our feelings before thou didst apply the torch of thy wild wrath to the holy temples of God and the peaceful habitations of his ministers. Robert was indeed ashamed of a wicked son, glorying in his mad and guilty rage; but Robert can never be ashamed of a son who is a humble penitent. No, Alexander; thy penance will be a crown of glory to us. Further, we would have thee remember, that the priesthood are but the ministers of the justice of a greater King than any upon earth; and we would have thee to bear in mind, how the Son of that Almighty King did, in all his innocence, submit himself to the scourge and the cross, to infamy and cruel suffering, that he

might redeem such sinners as thee and me. Let this humble thy pride and tame thy temper, if, indeed, pride or violence may yet remain with thee. And now haste thee homeward, that by a night spent in conversation and prayer with the holy Friar John, thou mayest fit and prepare thyself for to-morrow's duty, the which ought to be rather esteemed a triumph than a trial to thee. We shall be at the Castle of St Johnstoun by times to give thee our best comfort; till then take with thee a father's blessing."

The Wolfe of Badenoch bowed his head to receive the benediction of the good old King, who wept as he gave it him, and throwing one arm round his son's neck, patted his head with the other hand, kissing his cheek repeatedly with all the affection of a doating father, who abandons himself to the full tide of his feelings, and who is unwilling to shorten the transports he enjoys.

The news of the intended penitential procession of the King's son, the terrible Wolfe of Badenoch, spread like wildfire through the town of St Johnstoun, as well as throughout the surrounding country, and produced a general commotion. The Bishops of St Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dumblane, had already arrived at the Do-

minican convent, each having separately entered the town in great pomp, attended by all the high dignitaries of their respective dioceses. It was a proud triumph for the church, and secret advices had been accordingly sent everywhere, that it might be rendered the more imposing and impressive by the numbers and importance of those religious persons who came as deputations from the different monastic houses which were within reach. Of the canons regular, there were the Abbots of Scone, Inch Colm, and Inch Mahome, with the Priors of St Andrews, Loch Leven, Port Moak, and Pittenweem; of the Trinity, or Red Friars, were the Ministers of the Hospitals of Scotlandwell and of Dundee; of the Dominicans, or Black Friars, the inmates of the Dominican convent of Perth, where the ceremony was to take place, with the heads of the convents of Dundee, Cupar in Fife, St Monan's, and St Andrews; of the Benedictines, the Abbot of Dunfermline; of the Tyronenses, the Abbot of Lundores; of the Cistertians, or Bernardines, the Abbots of Culross and Balmerinoch; of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, the head of the convent of Inverkeithing; and, lastly, a numerous body of Carmelites, or White Friars, from the neighbouring convent of Tullilum. All these heads of houses were largely

attended; and if the crowd of these holy men was great, that of the laity and vulgar was tenfold greater. The houses of the place were unable to contain them, and many were glad to encamp on those beautiful meadows stretching to north and south of the town, thankful to huddle themselves under any temporary shelter they could procure. The Black Friars Monastery, which was to be the scene of the humiliation of the Wolfe of Badenoch, was all in a ferment, and many there were who, knowing the formidable character of him they had to deal with, muttered secret ejaculations that all were well over.

The King left his palace of Scone early in the morning, and entered Perth in his litter, attended by the Regent and the courtiers, being desirous to get as quietly as possible into the Castle. The King's body-guard were drawn out to line the street from the Castle to the Church of the Dominican Convent. The distance was short, but the crowd contained in that small space was immense. The murmur was great, and the eyes of the spectators were constantly directed towards the gate of the Castle, whence they expected the procession to come. Every motion among the multitude excited an accession of impatience.

At length the King's litter appeared, attended by the Regent, and followed by a crowd of courtiers. They came without order, and the litter hurried into the Church amidst the loud shouts of the people. All was then eager expectation, and nothing interrupted the low hum of voices, save the noise occasioned by those who made way for the different religious deputations, who approached the Church from different directions.

All these had passed onwards, and some time had elapsed, when a general hush ran through the crowd—a dead silence ensued—all eyes were directed towards the Castle-gate—and the Wolfe of Badenoch appeared. He was supported on his right hand by his confessor, the Franciscan Friar, and he was followed by his two sons Andrew and Duncan, and by a very numerous train of dependants, all clad in the same humiliating penitential garb, and walking barefooted. The Wolfe of Badenoch had no sooner issued from the Castle-gateway than he appeared to be astonished and mortified at the multitude of people who had collected to witness his abasement. Anticipating nothing of this sort, he had prepared to assume a subdued air; but he was roused by the sight, and advanced with his head carried high, and with all his usual

haughtiness of stride, his eyes flinging a bold defiance to all around, and their glances travelling rapidly from countenance to countenance, as they surveyed the two walls of human faces lining his way, as if he looked eagerly for some one whose taunting smile might give him an apology for breaking forth, and giving vent to his pent-up passion by felling him to the earth. He went on, biting his nether lip, and still he scanned them man by man; but everywhere he encountered eyes that quailed before his, and peaceful, gaping faces, filled with vulgar wonder, perhaps, and indicating much of fear, but nothing of scorn to be seen. The Franciscan was observed to whisper him; the Wolfe seemed to listen with reverence, and, as he approached the entrance to the Church, he adopted a more humble gait and look. As for his men, they hung down their heads sheepishly from the first, like felons going to execution.

When the procession had reached the great door of the Church, which was closed against it, the Franciscan approached, and knocked slowly and solemnly.

"Who is he who knocketh for admission into the Church of God?" demanded a voice from within.

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and

Lord of Badenoch, son of Robert, our most pious King," replied the Franciscan.

"We do know right well that there once was such an one as thou dost name," replied the voice; "but now he hath no existence. The great sentence of excommunication hath gone forth against his hardened obstinacy, and the Holy Church knoweth him no longer."

"He cometh here as an humble penitent, to crave mercy and pardon of our Holy Mother Church," replied the Franciscan.

"Is he ready to confess his sins against God and man, then?" demanded the voice: "Is he prepared humbly on his knees to declare his penitence, and to implore that mercy and pardon, the which must of necessity be extended to him ere he can again be received back into the bosom of that Church which he hath so greatly outraged?"

"He is," replied the Franciscan.

"Then, if such be his sincere professions," replied the voice, "let him and all understand, that albeit she can greatly and terribly punish, yet doth the Church delight in mercy, and it is ever her most joyful province to open her doors wide to her sincerely repentant children."

These words were no sooner uttered, than the folding doors were thrown wide, and the po-

pulace dazzled with the grandeur of the spectacle that presented itself. The verse of a hymn, that burst from a powerful choir within, added to the sublimity of the effect, whilst it gave time for the spectators to feast their eyes without distraction on what they beheld. In the centre of the doorway stood Walter Traill, the Bishop of St Andrews, arrayed in all the splendour of his pastoral robes. Within his left arm was his crosier, and in his right hand he raised aloft a large silver crucifix. On his right and left were the Bishops of Dumblane and Dunkeld, behind whom were the whole dignitaries of the three sees, in all their pomp of costume. The church had been darkened, that it might be artificially lighted by tapers, so as to present objects under that softly-diffused and holy kind of illumination, most favourable for the production of strong impressions of awe. By this was seen a long train of Abbots and Priors, with Monks and Friars from all those religious houses we have already particularised. The sight was imposing in itself, and picturesque in its grouping and disposal. The Franciscan Friar John whispered the Wolfe of Badenoch, and he bent down with a rigid effort until his knees were on the pavement. His sons and his followers imitated his example.

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Lord of Badenoch," said the Bishop of St Andrews, in a full and sonorous voice, when the music had died away, "dost thou earnestly desire to be relieved from the heavy sentence of excommunication which thy manifold crimes and iniquities have compelled the Church to issue forth against thee?"

"I do," replied the Wolfe in a firm voice.

"Dost thou humbly confess and repent thee of thy sins in general," demanded the Bishop; "and art thou willing to confess and repent thee of each sin in particular at the high altar of this holy temple?"

"I do so repent me, and I am willing so to confess me," replied the Wolfe.

"Then arise, my contrite son," said the Bishop, "and humbly follow me to present thyself at the holy altar of God."

The three Bishops with their attendants then turned away, and being followed by the Wolfe of Badenoch and his long train of penitential adherents, they moved in slow procession up the middle of the Church towards the high altar, before which the penitents kneeled down, with their stern leader at their head, the Monks of the various orders closing in behind them. The most perfect silence prevailed, and the soft fall

of the footsteps on the pavement, and the rustling of draperies, were the only sounds heard.

"Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Lord of Badenoch," said the Bishop of St Andrews, "dost thou confess that thou hast greatly sinned in thine abandonment of thine honourable and lawful wife, Euphame Countess of Ross, and dost thou repent thee of this thine offence?"

"I do repent me," said the Wolfe in an humble tone.

"Dost thou confess that thou hast greatly sinned, in taking to thy bosom that foul and impure strange woman, Mariota Athyn?" demanded the Bishop; "especially thou being——"

"I do so confess, and I do most sincerely, yea, cruelly repent me," cried the Wolfe, breaking in impatiently, and with great bitterness, on the unfinished question of the Bishop, and shouting out his answer in a tone that re-echoed from the Gothic roof.

"And art thou willing, or dost thou purpose to put this strange woman far from thee?" demanded the Bishop.

"I have already turned her forth," shouted the Wolfe, in the same furious tone; "yea, and before God, at this his holy altar, do I swear,

that with mine own will, these eyes shall never see her more."

"And wilt thou take back thy lawful wife?" demanded the Bishop, now willing to be as short as possible.

"I will," replied the Wolfe.

"And now, dost thou sincerely acknowledge and repent thee of all the outrages thou hast done to our holy Mother Church, as well as to God and his ministers?" demanded the Bishop.

"I do," replied the Wolfe.

"Then do I, God's servant, proceed to give thee and thine absolution, and to remove from thee the excommunication which was hurled upon thee by the Church in her just vengeance," said the Bishop, who immediately began to pronounce the form of absolution prescribed by his ritual, as well as that for removing the excommunication.

Miserere was now sung by the choir, after which a mass was chanted, and the impatient Wolfe of Badenoch, tired twenty times over of a ceremony which would have worn out a much more submissive temper, tarried not a moment in the Church after it was concluded, but, attended by the Franciscan, forced his way without any delicacy through the crowd, which yielded him a ready passage, and made a

hasty exit from the Church-door. Having gained the open air, he strode along the lane of guards, with an air that might have led a bystander to fancy that he gloried in his strange attire.

He was about to enter the Castle-gate, when a loud voice, calling "halt!" came from behind him. He stopped, and turning loftily round, beheld an armed knight, who came rushing through the abashed and scattered ranks of his men, who were straggling after him. In an instant the mailed warrior made an effort to grapple the Franciscan by the throat; and he would have succeeded, had not the Friar sprung nimbly aside to avoid him.

"Ha!" cried the Wolfe, in a voice like thunder, and at the same time snatching a formidable Scottish axe from one of the guards, and planting his unprotected body firmly before the Franciscan; "ha! who art thou that doth thus dare to attack the father-confessor of the Wolfe of Badenoch? Dost thou think that I have tyned my spirit in yonder Church? By all the solemn vows I have made, I will split the skull of any he who may dare to lay impious hands on this holy Franciscan."

"Is this possible?" cried the knight, raising his vizor, and showing himself to be Sir Patrick

Hepborne the younger; "can it be that the Earl of Buchan will thus defend the very Friar whom mine ears have so often heard him curse as a fiend? But let me pass to him, my lord; I do beseech thee to provoke me not, for, of a truth, I am mad, utterly mad, at this present."

"Mad or sober, Sir Patrick Hepborne," cried the Wolfe, "for now I do perceive that thou art indeed Sir Patrick Hepborne, and much as I do love thee, I swear, by the beard of my grandfather, that neither thine arm, nor that of any created man, shall reach the Friar, save through this body of mine."

"Wull she wants her helps? wull she wants her to grip him? wull she cleave the Wolfe's crown?" said Duncan MacErchar, who now stepped out from the ranks, and spoke into Sir Patrick's ear. "Troth, she wull soon do that, though she be twenty Wolfs, and a hundert Badenochs."

"Stand aside, Duncan," cried the knight, now somewhat sensible of his apparently unwarrantable violence, and altogether confounded by the Wolfe of Badenoch's unlooked-for defence of the Franciscan. "By St Baldrid, my Lord of Buchan, I should have as soon looked to have seen the eagle defending the owl who hath robbed her nest, as to see thee thus

stand forth the protector of that accursed priest, that foul-mouthed slanderer, and remorseless assassin. Let me secure him: he is a criminal who must be brought to justice."

"Thou shalt not touch the hem of his garment," roared the Wolfe of Badenoch.

"Nay, give him way, my noble Lord of Buchan," said the Franciscan, in a taunting manner; "let this brave knight have way to use his poniard, or his sword, against the defenceless body of a friar. But," continued he, snatching a long spear from one of those near him, whilst his eyes flashed a fiery defiance against Hepborne, "let him come on now, and he shall find, that beneath this peaceful habit there doth beat as proud and determined a heart as ever his bosom did own. As for his villainous and lying charges, I do hereby cast them back in his teeth as false."

"Caitiff," cried Sir Patrick, "I should gain but little credit, I trow, by attacking a vile Friar. I did but intend to prevent thine escape from the justice thou dost merit; and if I were but sure of seeing thee again in fitter time and place, when and where I could bring forward my charges, and prove them against thee, I should let thee go for this present."

"Nay, fear not; I will promise not to shun

thee, Sir Knight," said the Friar; "and thou, too, dost well know what charges thou shalt have to defend. The Earl of Buchan here will answer for my presence in the Castle, when it shall be wanted; but who shall answer for thine?"

"I will," said Sir John Haliburton, who chanced to come up at that moment.

"Sir John Haliburton!" exclaimed the Franciscan, with an air of astonishment. "Um—'tis well; and trust me, Sir John Haliburton, thou wilt find that thou hast more interest in his being forthcoming than thou dost at this moment imagine, and so the sooner he doth appear the better."

"Nay, I will follow thee now," replied Sir Patrick; "by all the holy saints, thou shalt not leave my sight."

"Come on, then," cried the Franciscan, with a bitter laugh; "and yonder cometh the King's litter, so thou shalt have little time to wait, I wis, for ample justice."

The Monk then entered the Castle, followed by the Wolfe of Badenoch, who still brandished the long Scottish axe, and looked sternly around from time to time upon Sir Patrick, as if suspicious that he might yet meditate an attack upon the Friar.

"Hoit oit," cried Duncan MacErchar, "and has the Hepbornes lost their spunks sith the battles o' Otterburns? Who would hae thought that ony ane o' her name would hae ta'en the boast yon way even frae the Wolfs o' Badenoch hersell? Hoits toits, Sir Patrick—uve, uve!"

"Pshaw," replied Sir Patrick, much mortified to find that MacErchar had attributed his forbearance to want of spirit, "would'st thou have had a Hepborne attack a monk, or a man half naked, and at such a time as this too?"

"Ou fye! faith, an' it may bes," replied Duncan, somewhat doubtfully; "but she might ha' gien them a clewr for a' tatts. But can she do nothing to serve her honour?"

"Yea," replied Sir Patrick, "plant thyself here; let not that Franciscan friar leave the Castle until I shall have questioned him."

"Ou, troth, and she'll no scruples to gie him a clewr," replied Duncan.

Hepborne hastened into the Castle, and Captain MacErchar mechanically took his stand, nor did even the approach of the King's litter, and the bustle that came with it, dislodge him from his post.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sir Patrick Hepborne, accompanied by his friend Sir John Haliburton, made his way into the hall of the Castle, burning with impatience to bring the Franciscan to a strict account, and half dreading that he might yet escape, by that mysterious power which had already so marvellously availed him. The Wolfe of Badenoch had hurried to his apartments to rid himself of his penitential weeds; and the Franciscan having disappeared also, the two knights were left to pace the hall for at least two hours, until Sir Patrick began to suspect that his fears had been realized. Rushing down to the gate, however, he found Captain Mac-Erchar as steady at his post as the walls of the fortress; and, having questioned him, he learned that no friar had passed outwards. When he returned to the hall, he found the King seated on a chair of state, and his courtiers ranged on either hand of him, forming a semi-circle, of which he was the central point.

"Sir Patrick Hepborne," said the King, with a high and distant air, "we are here to listen to thine accusation against the holy Franciscan Friar John, whom, we do understand, thou hast dared to malign."

"My Liege," said Hepborne, "the thirsty steed panteth not more for the refreshing fountain, than I do for audience of your most gracious Majesty, from whom I would claim that justice, the which thou dost never deny to the meanest of thy subjects."

"And we shall not refuse it to thee, the son of our ancient and faithful servant," replied the King; "to one who hath himself done us and our kingdom of Scotland much good service. Yet do we bid thee bear in mind, that the best services may be wiped away by the disgraceful finger of polluted iniquity. Speak, Sir Patrick, what hast thou to say?"

"Nay, my Liege, I would stay me until mine adversary doth appear to meet my charge," said Sir Patrick.

"'Tis so far considerate of thee," replied the King; "but thou mayest say on, for he will be here anon."

"I come here, then, to impeach this Friar John of having feloniously carried off a damsel from the Tower of London, where she did then

abide," said Sir Patrick Hepborne, violently agitated; "a damsel whom he did once before attempt to murder, and whom he doth even now secrete, if he hath not already cruelly slain her."

"Friar John is here to meet thy charge, Sir Knight," cried the Franciscan, who had entered the hall in time to hear what had fallen from Hepborne, and who now came sternly forward, attended by the Wolfe of Badenoch, the Lord of Dirleton, and some others; "Friar John shall not shrink from whatever tales thine inventive recrimination may produce against him: he too shall have his charge against thee; but let thine be disposed of first, whereby the incredible boldness of thy wickedness may be made the more apparent to all."

"What sayest thou?" demanded Hepborne, with considerable confusion.

"I do say," replied the friar, "that conscious guilt doth already stagger thee in the very outset of this thine infamous attempt against an innocent man, whom thou would'st fain sacrifice to hide thy foul deeds. Guilt doth often prove its own snare, and so shall ye see it here, I ween."

"Villain, wretch, fiend!" cried Sir Patrick Hepborne, who forgot in his resentment the

presence in which he stood; "mine emotions, the which thou would'st have others so misjudge, have been those only of horror and astonishment at thine unparalleled effrontery. My Liege, this fiend, this wicked sorcerer—for so do I believe him to be—this assassin——"

"Ha! by the ghost of my grandfather," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, who stood by, now restored to all his knightly splendour—"by the ghost of my grandfather, but I will not stand by to hear such names hurled without reason on my holy father confessor. As he is here to answer thee, Sir Patrick Hepborne, and as I would not willingly seem to interfere with justice, say what thou wilt of calm accusation, for I fear not that he will cleanse himself whosoever may be foul. But, by all the holy saints I swear, that, friends though we have been, I will not hear the holy man so foully miscalled; and I am well willing to fight for him to the outrance, not only in this world, but in the next too, if chivalry be but carried thither."

"Silence, son Alexander," said the King; "speak not, I pray thee, with lips so irreverent. And do thou, Sir Patrick Hepborne, proceed with thy charges, withouten these needless terms of reproach, the which are unseemly in our presence, and do but tend to inflame."

"My Liege," said Sir Patrick, making an obeisance to the King, "I shall do my best to restrain my just indignation.—The Lady Beatrice, of whom I do now speak, did accompany me to Morayland in the disguise of a page; and——"

"Ha!" exclaimed the King, starting with an air of surprise, and exchanging a look with the Franciscan and some others, that very much discomposed Sir Patrick; "so—dost thou confess this?"

"I do confess nothing, my Liege," replied Sir Patrick; "I do only tell the truth. When we were guests for some days to thee, my Lord of Buchan, at Lochyndorbe, this friar did enter the apartment of the Lady Beatrice armed with a dagger, and had she not fled from him to save her life, she had surely been murdered by his villainy. Already have I told that he did snatch her from the Tower of London, by means of false representations made to Friar Rushak, King Richard's confessor, and thence he did carry her by ship to Scotland, as I do know from Friar Rushak himself. I do therefore call on him to produce the damsel straightway, if indeed his cruelty hath not already put it beyond his power so to do."

"Hast thou aught else to charge him withal?" demanded the King.

"Nay, my Liege," replied Hepborne, "but I require an immediate answer to these charges."

"Before I do give a reply," said the Franciscan, assuming a grand air, "I, on my part, do demand to know by what right Sir Patrick Hepborne doth thus question me?"

"Right, didst thou say?" exclaimed Hepborne; "I must answer thee by simply saying, that I do question thee by that right which every honourable knight hath to come forward in the cause of the unfortunate. But I will go farther, and say before all who are here present, that I do more especially appear here against thee for the unquenchable love I do bear to the Lady Beatrice."

"Ha! so," replied the Franciscan, with a bitter expression; "thou hast so far confessed that thou didst entertain the Lady Beatrice in thy company, in male attire, and that thou dost cherish an unquenchable passion for her? Then, my Liege, do I boldly accuse this pretended phœnix of virtue, this Sir Patrick Hepborne, of having stolen this damsel from the path of honour—of having plunged her in guilt—of having so bewitched her by potent charms, that she did even follow him to London, whence, with

much fatigue and stratagem, I did indeed reclaim her, yea, and did bring her to Scotland in a ship. But she was not many hours on land when she so contrived as to flee from me; and no one can doubt that her flight was directed to him, who hath thrown his sorcery over her, and to whom she hath made so many efforts basely to unite herself again."

"Friar, thou hast lied, grossly and villainously lied," cried Sir Patrick Hepborne in a fury. "But now let me, in my turn, demand of thee, what hast thou to urge that mought have given thee right so to control the Lady Beatrice?"

"All have right to prevent the commission of wickedness," said the Franciscan. "But I do claim the right of parentage to control the Lady Beatrice. I am her uncle. Hath not so near a parent some right to control the erring daughter of his brother? Speak then—tell me where thou hast hid her, Sir Knight."

"Can this be true?" exclaimed Sir Patrick Hepborne, petrified with astonishment at what he heard; "canst thou in very deed be the uncle of the Lady Beatrice? But what shall we say of that tender uncle who doth enter the apartment of his niece at midnight with a dagger in his hand? Villain, I observe thee blench

as I do speak it. Thou art a villain still, let thy kindred to her be what it may. Thou hast murdered my love, and thou would'st shift off suspicion from thyself, by an endeavour to throw guilt upon me. Wretched hypocrite, foul stain to the holy habit thou dost wear—say where, where hast thou bestowed the Lady Beatrice? Is she dead or alive?"

"Nay, foul shame to knighthood that thou art, 'tis thou who hast secreted the Lady Beatrice—thou who hast poisoned her mind—thou who hast disgraced her—thou who dost hide her from the light of day, that she may minister to thine abandoned love. Tell, tell me where thou hast hid her—or, friar as I am, I do here appeal thee to single duel."

"Ha!" said Sir Patrick, "and right willingly, I trow, shall I do instant battle in support of mine unsullied honour—in support of the honour of her who hath been so foully calumniated; but with a friar like thee!"

"Nay, let that be no hindrance, Sir Knight," cried the Franciscan, whilst his eyes darted lightnings; "now indeed I am a friar; but, trust me, I was not always so. In me thou shalt have no weak or untaught arm to deal withal, and if I may but have dispensation——"

"Talk not so, Friar John," said the King;

"thou shalt never be suffered to peril thy life. Thou must seek thee out some cham——"

"Nay, seek nowhere but here," cried the Wolfe of Badenoch, slapping his right hand furiously on his cuirass. "If the good Friar John doth bestir himself to save my soul, 'tis but reason, meseems, that I should rouse me to save his body. I am in some sort a witness to the truth of part of what he hath asserted. So, by the blood of the Bruce, Sir Patrick——"

"Nay, nay, my Lord Earl," cried the old Lord of Dirleton, now starting up with an agitation that shook every fibre, and with a countenance in which grief and resentment were powerfully blended; "verily, I am old; but old as I am, I have still some strength; and my heart, at least, hath not waxed feeble. It shall never be said that a De Vaux did suffer a son of the Royal house of Scotland to risk the spilling of his blood, to save that which hath already been so often shed in its defence, and the which shall be ever ready to flow for it, whilst a drop of it may remain within these shrivelled veins. Here am I ready to encounter that caitiff knight, on whose smiles, when an infant, I looked with delight, as the future husband of my very daughter Beatrice, and who did so gain upon me lately by the plausible semblance of

virtue. Base son of thy noble sire, full hard, I ween, hath it been for me, an injured father, to sit silent thus listening to thy false denials, and thy vile recriminations against my brother John. But now do I give thee the lie to them all, and dare thee to mortal combat."

"My lord, my lord," cried Sir John Haliburton, going up to the Lord of Dirleton in great astonishment, "calm thy rage, I beseech thee. What is this I do hear? Of whom dost thou speak? For whom dost thou thus hurl mortal defiance against my dearest friend Sir Patrick Hepborne? Daughter, said'st thou?"

"Ay, daughter, Sir John Haliburton," exclaimed the old man; "my daughter Beatrice —she whom I have discovered to be yet alive, only that I may wish her dead. Oh, I could bear the loss of mine innocent infant—I could forgive a sinning and now repentant brother—but to forgive the villain who hath robbed my sweet flower of her fragrance—no, no, no, 'tis impossible. The very thought doth bring back all a father's rage upon me. Give me my daughter, villain!—my daughter.—Oh, villain, villain, give me my daughter!" The aged Lord of Dirleton, exhausted by the violence of his emotions, tottered forward a step or two towards Sir Patrick, and would have sunk down

on the floor had he not been supported to the seat he had occupied.

"Sir Patrick Hepborne," said Sir John Haliburton, sternly advancing towards him, after he had assisted the father of his future bride, "we have been warm friends, yea, I did come in hither to stand by thee to the last, as thy friend; but my friendship did sow itself and spread its roots in that honourable surface with the which thou wert covered. 'Tis no wonder, then, that it should dry up and wither when it doth push deeper into the less wholesome soil, which was hitherto hid from my sight. The Earl of Buchan, the Lord of Dirleton—nay, all do seem to know thy blackness, and I do now curse myself that we were ever so linked. We can be friends no longer; and sith that it hath pleased heaven to deny a son to that honourable but much-injured lord, it behoveth me, who look soon to stand in that relation to him, to take his wrongs upon myself. We must meet, yea, and that speedily, as deadly foes.—My Liege," continued he, turning towards the King, and making his obeisance, "have I thy gracious permission here to appeal Sir Patrick Hepborne to single combat of outrance, to be fought as soon as convenient lists may be prepared?"

"Thou hast our license, Sir John Haliburton," replied the King; "to-morrow shall the lists be prepared, and on the day thereafter this plea shall be tried."

"Then, sith that I have thy royal license, my Liege," cried Sir John Haliburton, "I do hereby challenge Sir Patrick Hepborne to do battle with me in single combat of outrance, with sharp grounden lances, and after that with battle-axes, and swords and daggers, as may be, and that unto the death: And this for the foul stain he hath brought upon the noble family of De Vaux, of the which I am about to become a son, and may God defend the right, and prosper the just cause;" and with these words, Sir John Haliburton threw down his gauntlet on the floor.

"I will not deny," said Sir Patrick, as he stooped to lift it with a deep sigh, "I will not deny that it doth deeply grieve me thus to take up the gauntlet of challenge from one whom I have so much loved, and one for whom I should much more willingly have fought to the death, than lifted mine arm against him. But the will of an all-seeing Providence must be obeyed; that Providence, who doth know that I wist not even that the Lady Beatrice was aught else but the page Maurice de Grey, until after she did

flee from me. Twice did I afterwards behold her; once in the field of Otterbourne, where she had piously sought out and found the body of her benefactor, Sir Walter de Selby, and once within the church of Norham, where she did assist at his funeral rites; but on neither of these sad occasions had I even speech of her. A third time I did behold her but for an instant in the house of Sir Hans de Vere, in the Tower of London, and then did I save her, at the peril of my life, from what I then conceived to be a base assault of King Richard of England against her, for the which I did pay the penalty of imprisonment. On these three occasions only have mine eyes beheld her, sith that we parted at Tarnawa. If to love her honourably and virtuously be a crime, then am I indeed most guilty; but for aught else——"

"Thou hast told a fair tale, Sir Patrick," said the King, shaking his head.

"Nay, 'twere better to be silent, methinks, than thus to try to thrust such ill-digested stories on us," cried the Franciscan. "But 'tis no wonder that he should be loath to appear in the lists in such a cause: conscience will make cowards of the bravest."

"Nay, let God judge me then," cried Sir Patrick Hepborne, turning fiercely round, and

darting a furious glance at the Friar. "Conscience, as with thee, may sleep for a time; but trust me, its voice will be terribly heard at last. Then bethink thee how thou shalt answer thine, when thy death-bed cometh. Coward, said'st thou?—By St Baldrid, 'tis the first time—But, Sir John Haliburton, thou at least wilt readily acquit me of aught that may have so disgraceful a savour. I do accept thy challenge; I am thine at the appointed time; may God indeed defend the right! Then shall mine innocence appear, while the transcendant virtue of the Lady Beatrice, whom I do glory to proclaim my lady-love, shall shine forth like the noonday sun."

By one of those unfortunate accidents which sometimes occur, it chanced that the elder Sir Patrick Hepborne had been gone for some days on private business to his Castle of Hailes. Had he been present, this unfortunate feud might have perhaps been prevented; but he could not be now looked for at Scone until after the day fixed for the duel; and even if he had been expected sooner, things had already gone too far to have been arrested, without some living proof to establish the truth. Sir John Assueton was present during the scene we have described; but he had been too much confounded by all he had witnessed and heard, to be able to utter a sentence.

"My dear Assueton," said Sir Patrick, going up to him, and taking him aside after all was over, "my friend, my oldest, my long-tried, my stanchest friend—thou brother of my dearest affections, from thee, I trust, I may look for a fairer judgment than these have given me?"

"Thou mayest indeed, Hepborne," replied Assueton, griping his friend's hand warmly. "Trust me, it doleth me sorely to see such deadly strife about to be waged between thee and one whom we both do so much love. Yet are the ways of Providence past our finding out. But may God do thee right, and make thy virtue appear."

"Thou canst not have been astonished at the tardiness I did show?" said Hepborne. "Alas, my heart doth grieve to bursting; perplexed, lost in a maze of conjecture, the whole doth appear to me to have been delusion. So the Lady Beatrice proveth to be the long-lost daughter of the Lord of Dirleton! and the Franciscan—ha!—the Friar—he then is that John de Vaux who did so traitorously steal his brother's child!—and hath the word of such a villain had power to face down mine?—Oh monstrous!—Nay, now do I more than ever fear for the safety—for the life—of her whom I do love to distraction. And then her pure fame blasted,

mine own good name tarnished, and no other means left for the cleansing of mine honour and her fame, but to lift the pointed lance, and the whetted sword, against the life of him, whom, next to thee, I do of all men account most dear to me! May the holy Virgin, may the blessed Trinity, aid and sustain me amid the cruel host of distresses by the which I am environed!"

"Most hardly art thou indeed beset," replied Sir John Assueton; "yet hast thou no other choice, but to put thy trust in God, and to do thy best in this combat for the establishment of thine own honour as a knight, and the pure fame of thy lady-love, leaving to Providence the issues of life and death."

After this conversation, Sir Patrick Hepborne and Sir John Assueton prepared to leave the Castle. As they were passing through the gateway, Hepborne, who was deeply absorbed in his own reflections, was gently touched on the arm by some one.

"She be's here, Sir Patricks," whispered Duncan MacErchar; "troth, she hath catched the Friars, and troth, she be's a strong sturdy loons—Uve, uve, but she had a hard tuilzie wi' her."

"What? whom?" cried Sir Patrick.

"Troth, she did tell her to stand there till Sir

Patricks come," said MacErchar; "but she would not bide; and so, afore a' was done, she was forced to gie her a bit clewring. Would she no likes to——"

"What!" cried Sir Patrick, now beginning to comprehend him, "thou dost not talk of the Franciscan? I do hope and trust thou hast not hurt the Franciscan?"

"Phoo! troth, as to tat, she doth best ken hersel the Friars," replied Duncan; "but hurts or no hurts, she be's in here," continued he, pointing under the gateway to a low vaulted door, "and she may e'en ask the Friars hersell."

"Holy Virgin!" cried Hepborne, "thou hast ruined me with thy zeal. Open the door of this hole, and let me forthwith release the Friar. Though he be mine enemy, yet would I not for kingdoms lie under the foul suspect of having caused him to be waylaid."

"Troth she shall soon see her," said Duncan, opening the door of the place—"Ho, ho, ho! there she doth lie, I do well wot, like a mockell great grey swine."

There indeed, in an area not four feet square, was squeezed together the body of the Franciscan. He had a considerable cut and bruise upon his tonsure, from which the blood still oozed

profusely. He seemed to be insensible; but he was no sooner lifted into the open air, than it appeared that his swoon was more owing to the closeness of the hole he had been crammed into than the wound he had received. He quickly began to recover, and Sir Patrick raised him up, and assisted him to stand.

"To thee, then, I am indebted for this villainous traiterie?" cried the Franciscan, looking wildly at Sir Patrick, and shaking himself free from his arms as he said so. "Oh, shame to knighthood, thus to plant an assassin in my path; but rivers of thy blood shall speedily flow for every drop that doth now fall from this head of mine."

With these words, he darted into the Castle ere Sir Patrick could speak, leaving him stupified by this unfortunate mistake, which had brought a fresh cause of shameful suspicion upon him.

"May she leave her posts noo?" demanded Duncan MacErchar with great coolness.

"Leave thy post!" cried Hepborne in a frenzy; "would thou hadst been in purgatory, knave, rather than that thou hadst wrought me this evil."

"Och, hoit-toit!" cried Duncan: "Spur-

gumstory! Uve, uve! and tat's from Sir Paitricks!"

"Forgive me, Duncan," cried Hepborne, immediately recovering his self-command, and remembering whom it was he had so wounded, "forgive my haste. I do well know thy zeal. But here, by ill luck, thou hast fortuned to carry it farther than befitting. It will be but an evil report when it shall be told of Sir Patrick Hepborne, that he did plant a partizan to assail and wound the Friar with whom he was at feud. But thou art forgiven, my friend, for I do well know that thine intention was of the best."

"Phoo-oo-o!" cried Duncan, with a prolonged sound, "troth and she doth see that she hath missed her marks, for she did hit the Friars a clewr. But troth she will see yet and mend the Friar's head; and sith she doth ken that she hath a feud wi' her, och, but she will mak her quiet wi' the same plaisters that did the ills."

"On thy life, touch him not again," said Sir Patrick, "not as thou dost love me, Duncan. Let not the Friar be touched, else thou dost make me thy foe for ever."

"Phoo, ay, troth shes no meddles mair wi' her," said Duncan; "ou ay, troth no, she'll no meddles."

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILST preparations are making for the duel, it may not be improper to relieve the reader's mind regarding the Lady Beatrice, who had thus unwittingly become the subject of a feud likely to terminate so fatally. After having providentially effected her escape, first from the flames of the Hospital of the Maison Dieu, and then from the base and treacherous protection of Sir Andrew Stewart, she fled through the garden, and being bewildered by a complication of terrors, she ran she knew not whither, and unwittingly taking the direction of the town, rushed wildly through the streets. Terror-struck by the blaze of the Cathedral, and the shouts of those who were engaged in its destruction, some of whom her fears led her to imagine had joined in the pursuit which she believed Sir Andrew Stewart still held after her, she darted onwards with inconceivable rapidity, until she had passed quite through the

town. A little beyond its western entrance, she beheld a light at some distance before her, and believing that it proceeded from the casement of some cottage, she sprang towards it with renewed exertion. To her great disappointment, it turned out to be one of those lamps kept burning within a shrine of the Virgin that stood by the way-side. She sank down exhausted before the image it contained, and clasping hands together, implored protection from her whom the figure represented.

While she was occupied in devotion, she heard the distant tramp of a horse. At first she was doubtful of the reality of the sound, confounded as it was with the far-off shouts of the Wolfe of Badenoch's people; but it soon became too distinct to be mistaken. It came not very quick, however, and she had yet time to flee. Filled with fresh alarm, she again sprung to her feet; but, alas! their strength was gone. Her limbs refused to do their office, and, tottering for a step or two, she again sank down on the ground, under the half shadow at the base of the little Gothic building. As she fell, the horseman came on. He halted in doubt whether that which he beheld sink so strangely was corporeal or spiritual. His horse, too, seemed to partake of his alarm; for when he

tried to urge the animal to pass by, he snorted and backed, and could not be persuaded or compelled to advance by any means the rider could use.

Meanwhile, the Lady Beatrice, believing that the man who rode the horse had halted for the purpose of dismounting, lay trembling with apprehension that Sir Andrew Stewart was about to seize her. Fear robbed her for some moments of recollection, from which temporary stupor she was roused by feeling her waist powerfully encircled by two arms of no pigmy size or strength, upon which she screamed aloud and fainted away.

When the Lady Beatrice regained her recollection, she found herself seated on the saddle, and travelling at a good round pace. She was held in her place, and supported by the same sinewy arms, which were also employed in guiding the reins, and pressing on the steed.

"Mercy, mercy, Sir Andrew Stewart," shrieked she; "oh, whither dost thou carry me?"

"St Lowry be praised that thou hast gathered thysell back frae the warld o' sauls, my leddy! Of a truth, I did greatly fear that thy spirit had yode thither."

"Merciful Providence, Rory Spears!" cried

the Lady Beatrice, almost doubting the evidence of her ears. "The holy Virgin be praised, if it be thee indeed!"

"Yea, in good troth, it is assuredly me, Roderick Spears, esquire, at the humble service of thy leddyship," replied Rory.

"Then thanks be to the blessed Virgin, I am safe!" replied Beatrice.

"Safe!" cried Rory; "yea, as safe as the bold heart of an esquire can make thee. Trust me, they sall tak measure o' ane ell and ane half o' this lance that hangs ahint me here, that may essay to do thee aught o' harm between this and Tarnawa, whither my shalty Brambleberry shall speedily convey us."

"May the saints unite to shower their blessings upon thee, Rory, for thy timely aid!" cried the Lady Beatrice; "but how, I pray thee, didst thou chance to rescue me from the power of Sir Andrew Stewart?"

"What!" cried Rory, "so that ill-doing, misbegotten fumart hath been besetting thee again with his accursed traiterie. By St Lowry, but I did aince tak measure o' him afore."

"Yea, he encountered me as I did escape from the flames of the Maison Dieu, and he pursued me to a shrine of the Virgin, where he was in the act of laying his impure hands on me, when I did faint away."

"Na, troth, my leddy," said Rory, "the hands that war laid on thee war my hands; and though I sould speak weel o' that the which be's mine ain, I do boldly avow that they are purer than the scartin' claws o' that mouldwarp, albeit they hae handled mony a foul fish, and I wad be sair ashamed an they war not teugher. It was me that took haud o' ye, my leddy, and I made bauld to do that same, (being ane esquire,) that I might succour ye, distressed damsel that thou wert, by lifting thy dead body into the saddle, that wi' a sair heart I mought bring thee aff to Tarnawa, where, an thou didst not recover thee, thou mightest have had ane honourable yirdin."

"But tell me, I pray thee, how thou didst chance to come there?" demanded Beatrice.

"I'll tell thee," said Rory. "My master the Yearl did send me to Aberdeen wi' a flight o' falcons he had promised till the King's Majesty; so I hae been there, yea, and did behold his Royal Grace afore he depairted for his Palace o' Scone. I wot he was weel pleased wi' the birds, and he did show me the fair side o' his royal favour for bringing them, partly, nae doot, for the sake o' my noble master the Yearl o' Moray, and partly, I do opine, because I am noo ane esquire admitted and acknowledged,

the which the King himsell did alswa most graciously confirm out o' his ain mouth. For, says he to me, 'Squire Rory,' says he, 'are the falcons well mewed, and hast thou reclaimed them to purpose?' To the which I did answer, 'Try ye them, my royal Liege, and ye'll see gin there be ony royal hern that 'ill mount wi' them. Trust me, my Lord King, that they have a wing that will carry them up to the very riggin' o' the lift, an ye can find a hern that 'ill gang there before them.' The King gied a most gracious laugh thereupon, and so I did laugh too, and the lords did laugh. At length the King telled ane o' his fouk to see that Squire Roderick Spears was well feasted; and so I was, in good troth, yea, and got handsome guerdon I rauken alswa. So, as I was on my way back from Aberdeen, I stopped late yestreen at the Spital o' the Mason's-Due; but I had not lain long asleep, until I was started to my legs by the cry o' fire, and the flames bursting out. I hurried on some of my garments, and grupping the rest in my hands, I made the best o' my way to the stable; but there I could not get in for lack o' the key. It was firm fast, and I had hard wark, I wis, till I could get something to break it open wi'. Then did I ride through a' the town, to see what destruction the Wolfe o' Ba-

denoch was doing. But as I was but ae man, and that it would ill become me to find faut wi' the son o' the King or the brother o' my leddy Countess, I cam aff hot foot to tell the Yearl. So seeing thee moving in the light yonder, I maun just say, that, at the first, I did opine that thou wert something not o' this warld; and had it not been for Brambleberry here, who would by no means pass thee by, and whose good sense therein did gi'e me time to see that thou wert nae ghost, verily thou might'st ha'e lain there still for me."

Under the protection of the faithful Rory Spears, the Lady Beatrice arrived safely at Tarnawa, where she was joyfully received by the Countess. Her converse with the Franciscan had been enough to inform her of the pleasing fact, that she was indeed the daughter of the Lord of Dirleton; and the happy Jean de Vaux learned this much from her with a rapture that melted Beatrice's heart with emotions of delight she had never before experienced. To her, who had grown up without knowing aught of the affectionate regard of a near relation, how soothing must have been the pure embrace of a sister, of a sister too who had already shown herself to be the kindest of friends! But the joy of Jane

de Vaux and the Countess of Moray, who had fully participated in the felicity of her young friend, was converted into extreme anxiety about Beatrice, who was seized with a severe illness, the effect of the fatigue, shipwreck, dread, and agitation, to which she had been lately exposed. To add to their distress, the Earl of Moray had been gone from home for some days. It is no wonder, then, that the Countess and the Lady Jean de Vaux should have been too much occupied with their patient to think of making inquiry about her uncle the Franciscan; nor was it until the Earl returned that he did what they should have done before; and then it was they learned from the Bishop of Moray that the friar had gone on his important mission to the Wolfe of Badenoch.

CHAPTER XX.

Having thus seen the Lady Beatrice safe into the hands of friends, we must leave her to be recovered by their affectionate care, whilst we give some account of the preparations which were making for the duel between Sir Patrick Hepborne and Sir John Haliburton.

The Lord of Dirleton, after some moments of cool reflection, began to regret that his feelings had so hurried him away, as to make him forget that his family honour could gain but little by the cause of the duel being made public. He therefore lost no time in beseeching the King that the lists might be erected in some situation where the vulgar, at least, could be excluded; and, in compliance with this request, a spot was fixed on, in the meadow below the palace of Scone, and there workmen were employed in immense numbers, to insure their erection against the time fixed on. Even during the night they worked unceasingly, and the

lights were seen flitting about, and the hatchets, saws, and hammers were heard in full operation, so that, by the morning of the appointed day, a rudely-constructed amphitheatre of combat was prepared.

The morning was beautiful, and although all about the court knew that the day must end in a tragedy, yet nothing could be more gay or brilliant than the prologue to the scene. The King's pavilion was pitched close to the outside of the lists, and a private door and stair led up from it into a balcony over the centre of one of the sides of the inclosure, where the King took his seat, with the Regent, the Lord of Dirleton and his lady, together with the Franciscan and some others. Between the outer and the inner lists, a wide space extended all around on both sides, from one gate to the other, which was dedicated to the nobles and knights who sat on horseback, to witness the combat; and there were barriers in the inner circle of palisadoes, one opposite to each side of the gate.

The two knights arrived at the outside of the lists, each attended by his esquire, and armed at all points, both horse and man; and each of them waited at a different gate, that he might be admitted with all the ceremony of chivalry.

After the King was seated, the Constable, Marshal of the lists, and the heralds, took their stand in the places allotted for them below. Then appeared Sir John Haliburton, attended by his esquire, at the east gate; which circumstance being formally announced to the Constable and Marshal, they went thither to receive him.

"Who art thou, and for what purpose art thou come hither?" demanded the Constable.

"I am Sir John Haliburton," replied he; "and hither am I come, mounted and armed, to perform my challenge against Sir Patrick Hepborne, younger of Hailes, and to redeem my pledge. Wherefore do I humbly desire this gate to be opened, that I may be suffered to perform mine intent and purpose."

"Thou shalt have way hither if thou be'st indeed he whom thou dost set thyself forth to be," replied the Constable. "The Moor's head proper on thy crest, and thy golden shield with those three mascles on a bend azure, do speak thee to be he whom thou dost say thou art. Yet must we behold thy face. Raise thy vizor then, Sir Knight."

Sir John Haliburton did as he was desired, and his identity being acknowledged, he was led into the lists, and placed opposite to the King,

where he was to remain until the defendant should appear.

He had to wait no longer than the nature of the ceremony required, when the Constable was called to the western gate, to receive the defendant, who, on being formally questioned, declared himself to be Sir Patrick Hepborne, younger of Hailes.

"We do indeed behold the couped horse's head with bridled neck on thy crest," said the Constable; "and on thy shield gules, the chevron argent, with the two lions pulling at the rose, but we would have other proof that thou art in very deed Sir Patrick Hepborne. Raise thy vizor, Sir Knight, that we may behold thy countenance.—Ay, now we do indeed see that thou art the very defendant in this duel. Enter;" and he was accordingly led into the lists, and placed by the side of the challenger.

Then were the weapons of each examined. These were a lance, a battle-axe, a sword, and a dagger. The lances were measured, and everything was adjusted in such a manner that neither should have any undue advantage over the other. The Constable next besought to know his Majesty's pleasure, whether he would in person take the oaths of the combatants, or whether he would empower him and the Marshal

to do it; and having received his orders to proceed, they first addressed Sir John Haliburton, and demanded of him what were the terms of his challenge.

"I do appear as champion for William de Vaux, Lord of Dirleton," replied Sir John; "he being of an age which doth render it impossible that he can take arms in his own person; also for John de Vaux his brother, a friar of the order of St Francis, to do battle against Sir Patrick Hepborne, younger of Hailes, whom, in their name, and upon their credit, I do accuse of having wronged them in certain matters well known to his Majesty, as also to the defendant, and to compel him to own his guilt, or to clear it by his arm."

"Thou dost swear, then, on the holy Evangelists," said the Constable, "that this is the true cause of thy coming hither, that thou dost thyself believe the averments of those for whom thou dost appear, and that thou art prepared, if it be God's will, to support the same with thy life."

"I do so swear," replied Sir John Haliburton.

"And thou, Sir Patrick Hepborne," said the Constable, "dost thou comprehend the charge

that is brought against thee; and if thou dost, what hast thou to answer?"

"I do comprehend the charge," replied Sir Patrick; "and I do deny it solemnly in all its parts. I do deny that I have ever done injury to the Lord of Dirleton, or to any person or thing of his; and I do declare, that both to him and to his I have borne, and do still bear, the strongest love: This do I swear on the holy Evangelists; and God so help me as I do speak the truth."

Then the second oath,—that they had not brought with them other armour or weapon than such as was allowed, nor any engine, instrument, herb, charm, or enchantment, and that neither of them should put affiance or trust in anything other than God and their own valour, as God and the holy Evangelists should help them,—being solemnly sworn by both, each was led off to the barrier opposite to the gate he had entered by, where his banner and blazon were set up; and whilst both were in preparation, the usual proclamation was given forth by the heralds.

The lists were then cleared of every one, save only of two knights and two esquires, one of each to wait upon the Constable and the Marshal. The knight who was assigned to the

Constable was Sir William de Dalzell, and he who was appropriated to the Marshal was Sir John Assueton. To each was given a headless lance, and they sat mounted immediately before the place occupied by the Constable and the Marshal, and directly under the King's balcony, that they might be ready to separate the combatants, if it should so please the King.

When all was in readiness, the bugle-note of warning sounded from both barriers, and, after a short pause, the King issued the usual command, "*Laissez les aller!*" and the signal being given by the heralds' trumpets, the knights flew together. Haliburton and Hepborne had been, nay, were at that moment, warmly attached to each other, but his individual honour as a knight was dearer to each of them than even friendship. Whatever had been their feelings of regret, or unwillingness to engage in mortal strife, each now only remembered him of his own name and that of his lady as he spurred; and, throwing the blame on unhappy fate, which had thus doomed them to this unnatural struggle, each thought only of working the death of his opponent, as if it had been but the winning from him of some gaudy trophy in a tournament. The collision was tremendous: the clash resounded far and near, and a murmur of admi-

ration burst from the assembled knights. Both lances were shivered, and both steeds were thrown so much back on their haunches, that, for the fraction of a second, it seemed to the spectators as if it were impossible that they could again recover themselves.

But the horses regaining their legs, the riders lost not an instant in seizing the battle-axes that hung at their saddle-bows; and then the fight became dreadful indeed. Their blows fell so thick and fast upon each other's head and body, that the sound resembled that which may be supposed to come from the busy forge of an armourer; and desperate were the dints made in the plate-mail both of the horses and their riders. The noble quadrupeds reared and plunged, and, dexterously guided by the rein, leaped forwards and backwards, and from side to side, with as much precision, while the strokes were dealing, as if they had been but parts of the animals that combated on their backs. But this equestrian battle was not of long duration. A heavy blow from the axe of Sir John Haliburton fell upon the head of Hepborne's favourite war-steed, Beaufront, and, in defiance of his steel chamfron, the noble animal was so stunned by it, that he staggered, and measured his length on the sod. But as his

horse was sinking under him, Sir Patrick made his battle-axe tell heavily and loudly on the helmet of his opponent, who had leaned forward to give his stroke more weight, and he beat him fairly down from his saddle.

Sir Patrick extricated his feet from the stirrups with great agility as his horse was falling, and leaped on the ground. His antagonist, having taken some seconds to regain his legs, was completely in his power. But here friendship came into operation. Although he might, with perfect honour, have taken full advantage of Sir John Haliburton, he only brandished his battle-axe over him for an instant to mark that advantage, whilst the spectators shuddered, in expectation of the blow that was to put an end to the combat, and then, dropping his arm harmlessly by his side, he retreated a few paces, to wait until his antagonist should be again equal with him. The King, and the knights who looked on, clapped their hands in sign of approbation.

After a short pause, the combatants again approached each other, and desperate indeed was the encounter. The armour of both knights was battered so tremendously, that their helmets were soon shorn of their proud plumes and crests, which hung down in tattered fragments about

their heads. Soon afterwards, the lacings of their head-pieces were cut, and each, in his turn, lost his bassinet. Their surcoats were cut to shreds, and some of the fastenings of the most important defences of their bodies being also demolished, the plates dropped away piecemeal, and the persons of both were left comparatively exposed, having nothing to resist the blows but their hauberks and hauquetons. Still they fought with their battle-axes, until both becoming unable longer to wield them, they seemed to throw them away by mutual consent, and, drawing their swords and daggers, began to cut and stab, aiming at those places where their former weapons had opened breaches, through which they hoped to extract each other's life's-blood.

And now indeed the combat assumed the character of a deadly strife. The most experienced warriors present declared, that so perfectly matched a contest had never before been witnessed, and a very general opinion prevailed, that, instead of one of them only being slain, the death of both the knights would probably be the result of this fierce and desperate duel. Despairing of the life of her champion, the Lady Dirleton had already fainted, and had been borne out to the King's pavilion. The poor old

Lord of Dirleton also began to picture to himself the melancholy scene which must take place on the return of his daughter, the Lady Jane de Vaux, to weep over the cold and bloody corpse of him whom she expected to find warmly waiting to salute her as his bride. As for John de Vaux the Franciscan, he inwardly regretted that he had not been his own champion; the apprehension of evil fortune that naturally arises where there is a doubt, having already led him to fear that Haliburton had much the worst of the combat. As for Assueton and Sang, they each sat silently in their saddles, in the places where they were posted, doubtful and unhappy. Their eyes being more turned upon Hepborne than upon his adversary, they trembled to remark each new wound he received, and each reeling step which the successful blows of Haliburton occasioned. His growing faintness was anxiously and fearfully noticed by them in secret, and every moment made an accession to their anxiety and their fear. The minstrel, Adam of Gordon, who was seated among the attendants behind the King, trembled, clasped his hands, groaned, and moved backwards and forwards on his place; and as for Duncan MacErchar, who was there with his company of Guards, and who as yet knew little

of the usages observed at such duels, it was with the utmost difficulty that he was prevented from rushing to Hepborne's assistance, and he was at length only hindered from doing so by being seized by the order of the Marshal of the lists.

The combat was still raging, though both the knights were evidently growing fainter and fainter, when a bugle sounded at one of the gates, and one of the marshalmen being sent to ascertain the cause, brought a message to the Constable, that an esquire waited there who craved immediate admittance to the King; and the circumstance being signified to his Majesty, leave was granted to the stranger to enter. He no sooner appeared within the gate, than he was seen to push his horse furiously along behind the drawn-up ranks of the mounted knights who were looking on, making directly for the stair that led up from thence to the King's gallery. Some who recognised the face of this esquire knew him to be Rory Spears. Leaping from his froth-covered horse, he left him to pant, and, springing up the steps to the King's gallery, he was seen to throw himself on his knees before his Majesty. What he said was known only to those who were near the Monarch's person; indeed, the sudden appearance of this

messenger carried away the eyes of the spectators for a few moments only from the combat, which now appeared to be approaching nearer and nearer to that fatal termination which so many experienced heads had anticipated. Already both knights staggered and grew giddy with their numerous wounds and their loss of blood; and those generous bosoms who surrounded the lists, cursed the interruption which the King's attention was receiving, being persuaded that if it had been still directed towards the combatants, he could not possibly have allowed the duel to proceed, to the extinction of two such brave lives. They trembled with dread that he would not look or act until his interference would be of no avail; for it seemed as if every succeeding moment would see both the heroes extended dead upon the sod, that had been already rendered slippery with the blood they had spilt.

All at once a great confusion seemed to have taken place in the King's gallery. His Majesty himself appeared to be much agitated, and a signal was given, in his name, by the Regent, to the Constable and Marshal, to stop the combat. Their two knights assistants, who had both been in misery for the fate of their friends who were fighting, gave their horses the spur,

and darted forward like arrows, with their headless lances extended, to separate the combatants. The two champions, breathless and hardly able to support themselves, were yet not approached by any one, save by those who divided them by their lance-poles, for in this stage of the affair the duel was only stayed; and as it might yet be the King's pleasure that they should renew their strife to the death, the law required that they should be left precisely in the same state, that if the combat should recommence, it might do so with each champion in the same circumstances, with relation to his adversary, as he had been in when the King had interfered. Faint, and ready to drop, therefore, they supported themselves on their well-hacked swords; and whilst the blood poured from many a wound, they panted, and silently surveyed each other's grim and gory features, at the short distance by which they were divided, as if each read his own death legibly written in the death-like face of his opponent.

Female shrieks were now heard coming from the King's pavilion without the lists, and all was commotion in the King's gallery. Robert himself was seen moving away, supported by some of his people; and, in defiance of proprie-

ty, many were seen rushing out before him by the way that led down to the pavilion. In a few minutes the gallery was cleared.

Meanwhile the combatants still stood gazing with fixed and ghastly look at each other, while their two friends sat like equestrian statues, with their lance-shafts crossed between them, but uttering no word, and giving no sign : and while they were thus grouped, a messenger came to announce to the Constable, the King's pleasure that the duel should be forthwith terminated without farther bloodshed, he having taken the quarrel into his own hand; that he was prepared to decide it in his own pavilion, where the combatants were ordered immediately to attend him; that the two knights should be led forth of the lists, each by his own gate, the one by the Constable, and the other by the Marshal; and that both should make exit at the same moment, by signal from the heralds' trumpets, that neither might suffer the disgrace of having been the first to quit them.

The King's command was no sooner made known, than a loud shout burst from the brave and noble hearts who had witnessed this obstinate and sanguinary duel. His Majesty's orders were punctually obeyed, and Sir Patrick

Hepborne followed the marshalman with tottering steps, whilst Haliburton went staggering in the opposite direction, as if he was groping his way in the dark, after the Constable. The trumpets sounded, and they disappeared from the gates. Hepborne, supported by his guide and his faithful esquire, made the best of his way round to the external entrance of the King's pavilion; but thither Sir John Haliburton never came, for he swooned away the moment he had crossed the threshold of the gateway. As Hepborne was entering the pavilion, a lady, frantic with grief and despair, rushed by him, and made her way towards the eastern gate, followed by several attendants.

Sir Patrick made his obeisance to the King, immediately upon coming into the pavilion, and his Majesty, with the Regent, came kindly towards him, to praise his valour, and to inquire as to his safety. A crowd, among whom he recognised the Lord and Lady Dirleton, the Earl and Countess of Moray, and the Franciscan, surrounded a lady, who seemed to be overwhelmed with affliction.

"He is safe," cried half a dozen voices to her immediately on perceiving him; and the circle opening at the moment, he beheld the Lady

Beatrice de Vaux. At one and the same instant she screamed aloud when she saw him, and he sprang forward to throw himself at her feet, where he fainted away.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was not wonderful that a sudden ecstacy of joy, such as that which burst unexpectedly on Hepborne, coming after so much mental wretchedness, and when his bodily frame had been so weakened by fatigue, wounds, and loss of blood, should have thrown him into a swoon, from which he only awakened to show symptoms of a feverish delirium. He passed some days and nights under all the strange and fluctuating delusions of a labouring dream, during which the angelic image of her he loved, and the hated form of the Franciscan, appeared before him, sometimes separately, and sometimes together. Other figures also seemed to float around him, but in his delirium he knew them not.

It was after a long and deep sleep that he opened his eyelids, and felt, for the first time, a consciousness of perfect calmness and clearness of intellect, but combined with a sense of great

exhaustion. He turned in bed, and immediately he heard a light step move towards it from a distant part of the room. The drapery was lifted up, and the lovely though grief-worn countenance of Beatrice looked anxiously in upon him.

"Blessed angel," said Sir Patrick, clasping his hands feebly together, and looking upwards with a heavy languid eye, that received a faint ray of gladness from what it looked upon; "blessed angel, is it a fair vision that deceives me, or is it a reality I behold? I have dreamed much and fearfully of thee and of others—tell me, do I dream still, or art thou in truth Beatrice, the lady of my heart?"

"Hush, Sir Knight," replied the lady, a smile of pleasure delicately blending on her countenance, with a rich blush of modesty; "I am indeed Beatrice. It joyeth me much to hear thee talk so calmly, seeing that it doth argue thy returning health; but quiet and repose are needful for thee, therefore must I leave thee."

"Nay, if thou would'st have me repose in peace, repeat again that thou art Beatrice, that thou art mine own Beatrice," cried Sir Patrick feelingly. "Say that thy beauteous form shall never more flit from my sight; and that we shall never, never part."

"Do but rest thee quietly, Sir Patrick," said Beatrice. "Trust me, thine own faithful Maurice de Grey shall be thy page still, and shall never quit the side of thy couch until health shall have again revisited those wan and wasted cheeks."

"'Tis enough," exclaimed Sir Patrick, rapturously snatching her hand and devouring it with kisses; "thou hast already made me well. Methinks I do almost feel strong enow to quit this couch; and yet I could be ill for ever to be blessed with such attendance."

"Nay, thou must by no means think of rashly quitting thy sick-bed," said the Lady Beatrice, withdrawing her hand, and looking somewhat timorous at his impetuosity, as she dropped the curtain.

A stirring was then heard in the apartment, then a whispering, and immediately Assueton and Sang appeared, with anxious looks, at his bedside.

"My dearest friend, and my faithful esquire," said Hepborne, with a face of joy, and with so collected and rational an expression, that they could hardly doubt the perfect return of his senses; though they soon began to believe themselves deceived, for his features suddenly became agitated; "but what eye is that which

doth glare from between you? Ha! the face of mine arch enemy—of that demon, the enemy of the Lady Beatrice. Doth he come to snatch her from me again? Seize him, my beloved Assueton,—seize him, my faithful esquire; let him not escape, I entreat thee, if thou would'st have me live."

"We have been in error, my dearest Hepborne," said Assueton, calmly, after ascertaining that it was the Franciscan, who had been looking over his shoulder, that had excited Hepborne's apparent fit of frenzy; "this Franciscan, this friar, John de Vaux, hath now no evil thought or wish against thee or the Lady Beatrice. He was worked upon by false impressions, which were not removed until that providential discovery, the which did put a stop to thine unfortunate duel with Sir John Haliburton. But sith that all is now cleared up, the holy Franciscan hath made good reparation for all the evil his misjudgment did occasion thee; for sith that thou wert laid here, he hath never ceased day or night to watch by thy bedside, save when called to that of another; and to him, under God, do we now owe the blessed hope of thy speedy recovery."

"Strange," cried Hepborne; "but didst thou not say unfortunate duel? I beseech thee

speak—Hath my beloved friend, Haliburton, against whom fate did so cruelly compel me to contend—oh say not, I beseech thee, that aught hath befallen him. What, thou dost hesitate! Oh tell me not that he hath died by my hand, or happiness shall ne'er again revisit this bosom."

"He is not dead," said the Franciscan, "but he is still grievously sick of his wounds; yet may we hope that he will soon recover as thou dost."

"Thank God he is not dead," cried Hepborne, with energy; "thank God there is hope of his recovery."

"Nay, this good Friar John will keep him alive, as he hath done thee," said Assueton.

"Strange," said Hepborne, "to see thee, my truest friend Assueton, thus in league with the man whom I did esteem my bitterest foe: wonderful, to learn from thee that he hath exerted himself to recall me from death. Of a truth, then, I must of needscost yield me to conviction so strong, and pray him and God to forgive me for the hatred I did harbour against him."

"Nay, Sir Knight," said the Franciscan, "of a truth much hatred and misjudging doth need forgiveness on both our parts, and I do

grieve most sincerely and heavily for mine, as well as for the mischief it hath occasioned."

"But I do earnestly entreat thee to clear up my way through this strange wilderness of perplexity, in which I am still involved," said Sir Patrick.

"That will I most readily do for thee, Sir Knight," replied the Franciscan; "but anxiety for thy certain and speedy return to health would lead me to urge thee to postpone thy curiosity, until thou shalt have gained farther strength."

"Nay," said Sir Patrick, "of a truth I shall have more ease and repose of body, after that my mind shall have been put at rest."

"In truth, what thou hast said hath good reason in it," replied the Franciscan; "then shall I no longer keep thee in suspense, but briefly run over such circumstances as it may be necessary for thee to know.

"My brother, the Lord of Dirleton, hath told me that thou art already possessed by him of the story of the loss of his first-born infant daughter. It was I, John de Vaux, his brother, to whom he did ever play the part of a kind benefactor and an affectionate father—it was I who repaid all the blessings I received from him by robbing him of his child. My mother ('tis horrible to be compelled thus to avow it) was the worst

of her sex. I was young and violent of temper, and not being at that time aware of her infamy, I was hurt by the neglect with which she was treated, and, instigated by her, I boldly attempted to force her into the hall of my brother's Castle, then thronged by all the nobility and chivalry of the neighbourhood, to witness the ceremonial of baptism of the little Beatrice. My brother was justly enraged with mine impudence; he did incontinently turn both of us forth with disgrace, and in doing so he struck me a blow. Stung with the affront, I gave way to the full fury of my passion, and vowed to be revenged. My mother wickedly fostered mine already too fiery rage, till it knew no bounds. She urged me to watch mine occasion to murder the child; and although my young soul revolted at a crime so horrible, yet did her proposal suggest a plan of vengeance, which, with less of guilt to me, should convey as much of misery to my brother, and especially to his wife, against whom we had a peculiar hatred.

"It was long ere a fitting opportunity offered for carrying my purpose into effect. At length, after frequent watching, I did one evening observe the nurse walking in a solitary place, with the babe in her arms. With my face concealed beneath a mask, and my person shrouded in a

cloak, I came so suddenly on her, that I snatched the child from her arms before she was aware. Ere I could flee from the woman, she sprang on me like a she-wolf robbed of her young,—pulled the mantle from the child in a vain attempt to reach her, and clung to me so firmly as I fled, that, to rid myself of her, I was compelled to wound her hand deeply with my dagger. My horse was at hand, and to put the child equally beyond the reach of the affection of its fond parents or the cruelty of my mother, I wrapt it in my cloak, and riding with it over Lammermoor, consigned it to the care of a shepherd's wife. To avoid suspicion, I returned home immediately; but conscious guilt would not permit me to remain long near those I had injured. I withdrew myself secretly, and entered on board the privateer of the brave Mercer, where for some six or eight years of my life I encountered many a storm, and bore my part in many a desperate action. I was a favourite with the old man, and did gain considerable wealth with him; but my proud spirit would not brook command; so I quitted the sea-service, and travelled through foreign lands as a knight, when I did share in many a stubborn field of fight, and won many a single combat. Yet was I not always successful; and ha-

ving been overthrown in a certain tournament, I was so overwhelmed with mortification at the disgrace that followed me, that I became soured with the world, and straightway resolved to exchange the helmet and the cuirass for the Franciscan's grey cowl and gown, vainly hoping to humble my haughty temper by the outward semblance of poverty. But my towering soul was not to be subdued by a mere garb of penance.

"From the foreign convent into which I entered, I chanced to be sent to England, and having been recommended as a proper person for confessor in the family of the Earl of Northumberland, mine ambitious and proud heart did again begin to show itself. Sir Rafe Piersie, to whom I was more especially attached, made me large promises of future promotion in the church; and, having set his affections on the Lady Eleanore de Selby, he did employ me to further his suit. To effect this, I bribed a certain villainous pretender to necromancy, who was well known to have much influence over the old knight. But the villain deceived me Sir Rafe Piersie had a flat denial as well from the father as the daughter, and this did I partly attribute to the traiterie of the impostor, whose services I had paid for, and partly to the inter-

position of Sir Walter de Selby's adopted daughter, whom I did not then know to be my niece, the Lady Beatrice. Sir Rafe Piersie, believing that I had been playing the cheat with him, drove me indignantly away. I burned to be revenged against those who had occasioned this overthrow of my hopes, and soon afterwards I had nearly glutted my rage against the Ancient by a cruel death, from which he most narrowly escaped. I did then journey northwards to the Franciscan Convent at Elgin, where I arrived at the very time the Bishop of Moray was sorely lacking some one bold enough to beard the Wolfe of Badenoch. It was a task quite to my mind, and I accordingly readily undertook that, the which all others did most anxiously shun. Thou, who wert present at Lochyndorbe, may'st well remember how mine attempt was likely to have ended. As they dragged me from the hall, I did detect the companion of the Lady Eleanore de Selby under her page's disguise, having seen her by accident at Norham. One of mine old seamates, who chanced to be among the number of Lord Badenoch's men, procured me admission to the Castle, and he it was who effected mine escape from the horrors of the Water-Pit Vault. He would fain have had me flee instantly, but, much against his will, I did

insist on his showing me the page's chamber; and I went thither, determined to question closely her, whom I did then only know to be the companion of the Lady Eleanore de Selby, as to what share she had in persuading her friend against a union with the Piersie. I sought her chamber with my mind rankling with the remembrance of my disgrace, inflamed and full of prejudice against her, and, Heaven pardon me, it is in truth hard to say how far my blind rage might have hurried me, had she not fled from me at the sight of my dagger.

"It was soon after this that my brother William de Vaux came to Elgin. The remembrance of my ingratitude to him came powerfully upon me. I contrived to bring him, at night, into the church of the Franciscan convent, and then it was I discovered that his heart, instead of being filled with a thirst of revenge against me, was full of charity, compassion, and forgiveness. This discovery so worked upon my soul, already beginning to feel compunction for mine early wickedness, that I should have confessed all to my much-injured brother, had not some one accidentally approaching at that moment unluckily interrupted the conference and compelled me to retreat. But I went straightway to the good Bishop of Moray, with whom

by this time I stood in high favour for my bold service, and to him did I fully confess my sins against my brother, of the which, until now, I had but little thought, and had never repented. I did then forthwith solemnly vow to do all that might be in my power to restore his child to him, if that she did yet live. In this good resolution the Bishop encouraged me; yea, and he did moreover lend me ample means for effectuating the purpose I had in view. I hastened to the south of Scotland, to find out the woman with whom I had left the baby. From her I learned, that poverty and my neglect had induced her to part with Beatrice to Sir Walter de Selby. Then did I shudder to think of the scene at Lochyndorbe, where, but for the providence of God, I might have murdered mine own niece, and I secretly blessed a merciful Being who had snatched her from my hands.

"But now another cause of affliction took possession of me. Believing, as I did, that Beatrice was the unworthy partner of thy journey, and that thou hadst taken her with thee, by her own guilty consent, from Norham, where I did well know thou hadst been, I cursed my villainy, which had removed an innocent babe from that virtuous maternal counsel and protection, the lack of which, I believed, had been her undoing.

My suspicions were confirmed when I beheld thee among the crowd at the funeral of Sir Walter de Selby, in Norham church. I doubted not but thou hadst come thither to meet with Beatrice, and by her own consent to carry her off. Her eyes encountered mine as I stood near the altar, and as they were full of severity from the impressions then on my mind, it is little marvel that the sight of me should have produced the fainting fit into which she fell. That night I was deprived of all chance of an interview with her; and when I sought for one in the morning, I found that she had departed, no one knew whither. After seeking her for many days, I at last returned to Dunbar in despair, where I did by chance meet with the son of mine old sea captain Mercer, and from him I learned that she had been sojourning for some time at Newcastle, but that she had sailed for London. Having heard of the expedition of the Scottish knights thither, I readily believed that her errand was for the purpose of meeting him who had so won her heart from virtue. My soul boiled within me to rescue her from so base an intercourse, and mine old sea-mate having offered to carry me to the Thames in his ship, I did accept his aid, and did take her from thence as thou dost already know, Sir Knight;

but instead of making the port whence we had sailed, we were driven northward by a storm, and after much tossing, we suffered wreck on the eastern coast of Moray-land, whence I conveyed Beatrice to the Hospital of the Maison Dieu at Elgin, on that night the place was burnt by the Wolfe of Badenoch. As I was well assured that the lady had escaped from the fire, and that I could nowhere hear tidings of her, it was no wonder that I believed she had fled to thee,—for our stormy voyage had left me no leisure to undeceive myself by the discovery of her innocence."

The Franciscan then went on to give Sir Patrick such other explanations as his eager questions called for. But his patient seemed to be insatiable in his thirst of information. Afraid that he might do himself an injury, the learned leech forbade him further converse, and having ordered some proper nourishment for the invalid, desired that he should be left quiet. Sir Patrick accordingly fell into a deep and refreshing sleep, from which he next day awakened with pleasing dreams of future happiness.

Sir Patrick Hepborne the elder had not yet returned to Scone. The younger Sir Patrick saw less of the Franciscan after he became convalescent; but his friend Assueton was indefa-

tigable in his attendance on him, and Mortimer Sang did not even permit his love for Katherine Spears to carry him away from the affectionate duty he paid his master. It was not surprising, then, that his cure went on rapidly, being so carefully looked to. As he got better, he was visited by many. The King sent daily inquiries for him; the Regent came himself; and the Wolfe of Badenoch, though his impatient temper would never permit him to make his visit long, generally called three or four times a-day, to see how he did. But the grateful Duncan MacErchar lay in the anti-room like an attached dog, from the moment that Hepborne was carried into the palace, and never quitted the spot, save when he thought he could run off for something that might do him good or give him ease.

Hepborne was a good deal surprised, and even a little hurt, that amongst all those who came to see him in his wounded state, he had never beheld the old Lord of Dirleton, who had ever shown so warm a heart towards him until the late unfortunate misunderstanding. The Franciscan, too, came but to dress his numerous wounds, which were fast healing up, and then left him in haste. But when some days more had passed away, and he was enabled to

quit his bed, he learned intelligence that explained this seeming neglect of the De Vaux, and filled him with grief and anxiety. It was the anticipation of its producing this effect on him, indeed, which had occasioned the concealment of it, as the Franciscan feared that his recovery might have been retarded by the communication. Sir John Haliburton's case had been much less favourable than Hepborne's. His life still hung quivering in uncertainty. The Lord of Dirleton, his lady, and the unhappy Lady Jane de Vaux, never left him; and the Franciscan, who had been the unfortunate cause of bringing it into its present peril, was reduced to the deepest despair.

No sooner had Sir Patrick learned these doleful tidings, than, calling to his esquire, he put on his garments, and demanded to be instantly led to the apartment of Sir John Haliburton, where he found those who were so deeply interested in him sitting drowned in affliction, believing that they should soon see him breathe his last. Sir Patrick mingled his tears with theirs; but he did more—he spoke the words of hope, comfort, and encouragement; and the Franciscan and the others being worn out and almost rendered inserviceable with watching, he took his instructions from the learned leech,

and then seated himself by the wounded knight's bed-side. It seemed as if a kind Providence had blessed the hand which had inflicted the wounds with a power of healing them. From the moment that Sir Patrick sat down by his friend's couch, he had the satisfaction of finding his disease take a favourable turn. He never left his patient, who continued to improve hourly. In less than a week he was declared out of danger, and in a few days more he was able to join Hepborne, and the two happy sisters, Beatrice and Jane de Vaux, in their walks on the terrace of the palace.

The reader may easily fancy what was the subject of conversation during these walks. It was during one of them that the Lady Beatrice de Vaux was suddenly met by a woman of the most graceful mien, who, standing directly in her path, threw aside a mantle that shrouded her face. Astonishment fixed Beatrice to the spot for an instant, when, recovering herself, she sprang into the arms of the stranger, exclaiming,—

"Eleanore—my beloved Eleanore de Selby!"

The meeting was overpowering, and Hepborne hastened to conduct the two friends into the palace, where they might give full way to their feelings without observation. After their

transports had in some degree subsided, the Lady Beatrice eagerly inquired into the history of her friend.

"Proud as thou knowest me to be, Beatrice," replied Eleanore, "I do here come to thee as a suppliant, nor do I fear that I come in vain; albeit I have peraunter but ill deserved a favour at thy hands, since I did deceive thee into being the propagator of a falsehood, by telling thee that he with whom I fled from Norham was Sir Hans de Vere——"

"Ah, if thou didst but know into what wretchedness that falsehood had nearly betrayed me," exclaimed Beatrice; "but who then was thy lover?"

"Thou dost well know that my poor father was early filled by a wicked and lying witch with a superstitious dread of the union of his daughter with a Scottish knight, the cunning fortune-teller having discovered his prejudice, and fostered it by prophesying that such a marriage would lead to certain misery. So he did ever study to keep me from all sight of Scottish chevaliers. But, when visiting my aunt at Newcastle, I did chance to meet with Sir Allan de Soulis, who had fled from Scotland for having killed a knight in a hasty brawl, and to him did I quickly resign my heart. 'Twas this

which made me despise the splendid proposals of the proud Sir Rafe Piersie, and which rendered the thought of the horrid union with the Wizard Ancient, if possible, even yet more insupportable. I agreed to fly into the arms of Sir Allan; but, to effect mine escape, thy connivance was indispensable; nay, without thine aid it would have been impossible to have carried my scheme into execution. I did well know thine attachment and devotion to my father, and I felt how difficult it would be to shake thee from what thou would'st conceive to be thy duty to him. I saw, however, that I had thy full pity for the unwonted harshness I was enduring; yet I feared that if thou should'st discover the country of my lover, thou would'st never consent to keep my secret, far less to become my accomplice in an act that would tend to make Sir Walter so unhappy. I was therefore compelled to resort to falsehood. I did introduce Sir Allan to thee as Sir Hans de Vere, one who, from being kinsman to King Richard's favourite, De Vere Duke of Ireland, was likely to rise to high honours. By doing this, I hoped to weaken thine objections to the step I was about to take. Nor was I wrong in my conjecture, for thou didst at last kindly agree to facilitate my flight."

"And whither didst thou fly then?" demanded Beatrice.

"First to Newcastle," replied the Lady de Soulis, "and then to Holland. Being banished from his own country, and I dreading to remain in England, where he, too, could not tarry during war without proving himself a traitor to Scotland, we were compelled to retreat beyond sea for a time. It is not long since that the sad news of my father's death did reach me. I was struck with deep remorse for my desertion of him. We hastened back to Norham. There I found that some low-born kinsmen of my father's, trusting that I should never return, had seized on the greater part of his effects and divided the spoil. The small remnant that was left me was saved by the fidelity of the trusty Lieutenant Oglethorpe. There doth yet remain for us Sir Allan's paternal lands in Scotland, the which have not yet been forfaulted; but without the royal remission he dare not return hither to claim them. To thee, then, my Beatrice, do I look to use thine influence with the merciful King Robert in behalf of the gallant De Soulis, that he may be restored to his country, his estates, and the cheering countenance of his sovereign."

We need push the conversation between these

two friends no farther. It is enough to say, that the united entreaties of Hepborne, Haliburton, and the two Ladies De Vaux, soon prevailed in moving the clemency of the good old King, and the happy Lady De Soulis flew to England to be the bearer of her own good news to the brave Sir Allan.

The joy of the old Lord of Dirleton and his lady, in contemplating the happiness that awaited their children, may be imagined; and it will also be readily believed, that the delight of the elder Sir Patrick Hepborne was no less, when he returned to Scone, and found that he had lost his share of the general misery, and had arrived just in time to have full enjoyment in the unalloyed pleasure that spread itself throughout the whole court.

The King resolved, that the double nuptials should be celebrated in his presence, with all the splendour that he could shed upon them. The Bishop of Moray came from his diocese, at his Majesty's particular request, to perform the marriage rites; and the Wolfe of Badenoch, to mark his respect for the good man, actually made one of his rapid journeys into Buchan, to bring thence his neglected spouse, Euphame, Countess of Ross, that she might be present

with him on the happy occasion. So magnificent and proudly-attended a ceremonial had not been witnessed in Scotland for many a day. Old Adam of Gordon, who was now a member of the younger Sir Patrick Hepborne's household, composed and performed an epithalamium that put all the other minstrels to shame; and as for Squire Rory Spears, and Captain MacErchar of his Majesty's Guards, their joy was so totally beyond all restraint, that, much to the amusement of the company, they performed a bargaret together—a sort of dance of those days, which antiquarians have supposed to have borne some resemblance to the fandango of Spain, or the saltarella of Italy.

If the two knights who thus married the coheiresses of Dirleton were friends before, they now became attached to each other with an affection almost beyond that of brothers, and Sir John Assueton was united with them in the same strict bonds. Sir Patrick Hepborne being aware, that the unexpected discovery of his Beatrice had diminished the prospect of wealth which would have eventually accrued to Haliburton, had Jane de Vaux been the sole heiress of her father, privately influenced the old Lord to leave his Castle, and the larger part of his

estates, to his brother-in-law. On the death of William de Vaux, therefore, Sir John Haliburton became Lord of Dirleton. For the descendants of these marriages, those who are curious in such matters may consult DOUGLAS's *Peerage*, vol. I. pp. 223 and 687.*

We must not forget to mention, that Rory Spears and Captain MacErchar were called on

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* The reader, on consulting the second reference of our text, will find that Douglas has run into much confusion in regard to the Haliburtons. The Sir John Haliburton who married the co-heiress of Dirleton, he kills at the battle of Nisbet in 1355. Now, by consulting the first reference, p. 223, it will be found that Sir Patrick Hepborne, younger of Hailes, who married the other sister, was killed at the battle of Nisbet in 1402, at which time Sir Patrick Hepborne, sen. was alive. This we know to be true, and perfectly according to history; but to suppose that Sir Patrick Hepborne's brother-in-law could have been killed in 1355, is a glaring absurdity. The inconsistency is easily explained, however; for there were several Sir John Haliburtons, and two battles of Nisbet. There was a Sir John Haliburton killed at the battle of Nisbet in 1355, and there was a Sir John Haliburton taken at the battle of Nisbet in 1402. On this last occasion Sir Patrick Hepborne commanded. It is therefore quite probable that his brother-in-law might have had a share in the expedition. —Vid. FORDUN, II. p. 433.

soon afterwards to repeat their dancing exhibition, which had met with so much applause; and this was on occasion of the wedding of Squire Mortimer Sang and the lovely Katharine Spears. Many a happy hour had Squire Roderick afterwards, in teaching his grandson the mysteries of wood and river craft, whilst the youth's father, the gallant Sir Mortimer, was gathering wreaths of laurel in foreign lands, whither he had travelled as a valiant knight.

One of the last acts of King Robert, was to bestow a small estate in the valley of the Dee upon the veteran MacErchar. Thither he retired to spend a comfortable and respectable old age, and, having married, became the head of a powerful family.

It has always been a very common belief in Scotland, that when a wicked man becomes unexpectedly good, the circumstance is a forewarning of his approaching death. It was so with the Wolfe of Badenoch; for he lived not above two or three years after the reformation that was so surprisingly worked in him. The Franciscan, who still continued with the Earl as his confessor, gained a great ascendancy over his ferocious mind; and his endeavours to subdue it to reason, had also the good effect of enabling

him the better to command his own proud spirit, which he every day brought more and more under subjection. The happy effects of this appeared after the demise of him to whom he had been so strangely linked; for, despising that church advancement which was now within his grasp, he retired into the Franciscan convent at Haddington, where he subjected himself to the penance of writing the Chronicle from which these volumes have been composed; and those who have suffered the tedium of reading the produce of it, may perhaps be judges of the severity of this self-inflicted punishment. That the Wolfe of Badenoch had not failed to make good use of the remnant of his life, in wiping off all his old scores with the Church by making it large donations, we may well guess, from the following epitaph, which may still be read in well-raised black-letter characters sculptured around the edge of the sarcophagus in which his body was deposited, in the Cathedral of Dunkeld; but, where now, alas! there remains not as much of the dust of ALISTER-MORE-MAC-AN-RIGH as might serve to make clay sufficient for the base purpose to which the fancy of our immortal dramatic Bard has made his moral-

izing Prince of Denmark trace a yet mightier Alexander, and an Imperial Cæsar,

"To stop a hole to keep the wind away."

The Epitaph is :—

Hic Jacet
Dominus Alexander Seneschallus
Comes de Buchan et Dominus de Badenoch,
Bonæ Memoriæ,
Qui Obiit ff Die Mensis Februarii,
Anno Domini MCCCfCXV.*

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* This monument is still in tolerable preservation, though it suffered mutilation by a party of Cameronians about the time of the Revolution.

FINIS.

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